The Challenges Faced By Male Primary Teachers

By

Vaughan Cruickshank, BHM, MEd.

Thesis Submitted in Fulfilment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Faculty of Education

University of Tasmania

December 2016

Declaration of Originality

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for a degree or diploma by the University or any other institution, except by way of background information and duly acknowledged in the thesis, and to the best of my knowledge and belief it contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due acknowledgement is made in the text or the thesis, nor does the thesis contain any material that infringes copyright.

Signature:

Date: 21/12/2016

List of Publications

The author acknowledges that the following publications derive from this PhD thesis. The publishers of these publications hold the copyright for that content, and access to the material should be sought from the respective journals.

Cruickshank, V., Pedersen, S., Hill, A., & Callingham, R. (2015). Construction and validation of a survey instrument to determine the gender-related challenges faced by pre-service male primary teachers. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, *38*(2), 184-199.

Cruickshank, V. (2014). Challenges faced by the male primary teacher: A literature review. In N. Fitzallen, R. Reaburn & F. Fan (Eds.), *The future of educational research: Perspectives from beginning researchers* (pp. 87-98). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense.

Cruickshank, V. (2012). *Why men choose to become primary teachers.* Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, University of Sydney, Australia.

Signature:

Date: 21/12/2016

Statement of Co-authorship

The following people and institutions contributed to the publication of work undertaken as part of this thesis:

Vaughan Cruickshank, University of Tasmania.

Scott Pedersen, University of Tasmania.

Allen Hill, University of Tasmania.

Rosemary Callingham, University of Tasmania.

Author details and their roles:

Paper 1: Cruickshank, V., Pedersen, S., Hill, A., & Callingham, R. (2015). Construction and validation of a survey instrument to determine the gender-related challenges faced by pre-service male primary teachers. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education, 38*(2), 184-199.

Located in chapters 3 and 4.

Candidate was the primary author (50% equivalent), responsible for the idea, data collection, formalisation and development. Author 2 (20%), author 3 (20%) and author 4 (10%) contributed to the development of analysis and discussion, editing and refinement towards publication.

Paper 2: Cruickshank, V. (2014). Challenges faced by the male primary teacher: A literature review. In N. Fitzallen, R. Reaburn & F. Fan (Eds.), *The future of*

educational research: Perspectives from beginning researchers (pp. 87-98). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense.

Located in chapters 2, 5, 6 and 7.

Candidate was the sole author on this refereed book chapter paper.

Paper 3: Cruickshank, V. (2012). *Why men choose to become primary teachers.* Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, University of Sydney, Australia.

Located in chapters 2 and 5.

Candidate was the sole author on this refereed conference paper.

I the undersigned agree with the above stated "proportion of work undertaken" for each of the above published (or submitted) peer-reviewed manuscripts contributing to this thesis:

Signed:

Scott Pedersen

Primary Supervisor

School Of Education

University of Tasmania

Date: 21/12/2016

Authority of Access

This thesis may be made available for loan and limited copying and communication in accordance with the Copyright Act 1968.

Signature:

Date: 21/12/2016

Statement of Ethical Conduct

The research associated with this thesis abides by the international and Australian codes on human and animal experimentation, the guidelines by the Australian Government's Office of the Gene Technology Regulator, and the rulings of the Safety, Ethics and Institutional Biosafety Committees of the University.

Signature:

Date: 21/12/2016

Abstract

The percentage of Australian primary teachers who are male has noticeably decreased in the past thirty years. Education research has noted that men often leave the profession because of the gender related challenges they face in their profession. Challenges such as fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact have been identified by numerous studies of male primary teachers, yet researchers have spent much less time investigating strategies to assist male primary teachers cope with these challenges. This research project aimed to address this gap through the identification of practical coping strategies that male primary teachers can use to deal with the gender related challenges they face in their profession.

The falling number of male primary teachers is a concern for many key stakeholders who believe that more men are required, both in the classroom and in the wider school environment. These concerns have prompted numerous calls for increased male recruitment to, and retention in the primary teaching profession. Educational authorities in Australia have responded to calls for more men in primary schools by initiating policies designed to increase the numbers of male teachers. Despite the instigation of these recruitment-focussed initiatives such as scholarships and quota systems, the percentage of primary teachers who are male continues to fall. The continual decrease in male primary teachers suggests that more attention needs to be placed on the retention of male primary teachers already in the profession. Therefore, exploring the experiences of practising male primary teachers was a key focus in this research project. The identification of practical coping strategies might allow more male primary teachers to deal with the gender related challenges they face, and persist within their profession.

This study was conducted utilising a mixed methodology comprised of a survey and semi structured interviews. Social cognitive career theory (SCCT) was used as a lens to examine the challenges that influenced the retention of participants in this study. I initially surveyed participants' perceptions of the gender related challenges identified in previous male primary teacher literature. Descriptive analyses (means, standard deviations, frequency counts, reliability, construct validity, and Rasch modelling) of these data revealed three gender related challenges that were most difficult for participants in this study. These challenges were uncertainty surrounding physical contact, an increased workload due to expectations to take on masculine roles, and social isolation caused by difficulties in developing positive professional relationships with teaching colleagues. These findings were used to construct questions for the interview phase of this study. Interview participants agreed that these three gender related challenges were the most difficult they faced in their profession and elaborated on them at length.

Despite the difficulty of these challenges, no participants indicated they planned to leave the primary teaching profession. Rather, they detailed the coping strategies and supports that enabled them to deal with these challenges. These strategies included avoiding physical contact, using humour, and moving to public places to have one on one conversations with students As participants described how they dealt with the major gender related challenges they faced, a number of common themes emerged. These themes, which will be explored further within this thesis, included the influence of traditional hegemonic constructions of masculinity, schools perpetuating these societal constructions, and the importance of having strong support from teaching colleagues and school leaders.

Acknowledgments

Abbey

Thankyou for the energy, inspiration, motivation and wisdom you have given me along the way. I could not have done this without you.

Zara and Bridie

Thankyou for the beautiful smiles, laughter and happiness you greeted me with whenever I took a break from the computer.

Fenton, Fred, Harry, James and Steve

Thankyou for your willingness to speak openly about your perceptions of, and experiences as, male primary teachers.

Scott, Allen, Dean

Thankyou for the time, knowledge and support you have given me on my journey from where I was to where I am now.

Family, friends and colleagues

Thankyou for giving me the encouragement, support, space and understanding I have needed throughout this journey.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Teaching in primary schools presents many challenges and rewards for all teachers. It is a complex and dynamic workplace where teachers must navigate multiple interactions with students and colleagues on a daily basis. The context of primary schools is dominated by female educators across the world. The particular issues or challenges this context can present for male teachers have been identified by a substantial body of literature (e.g., Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Cushman, 2007; Kauppinen-Toropainen & Lammi, 1993; Mills, Martino, & Lingard, 2004; Skelton, 2009; Smith, 2008). Researchers such as Mills, Haase and Charlton (2008) noted men who have left the primary teaching profession directly because of these challenges. Despite these findings, the predominantly qualitative research on male primary teachers reveals less emphasis has been placed on the identification of practical coping strategies that they could use to deal with these challenges and persist in the profession. As a consequence, this exploratory study has investigated the gender related challenges faced by Tasmanian male primary teachers, and the coping strategies they employ to deal with these challenges.

In this mixed methods research project I used a survey and semi structured interviews to explore how male primary teachers in Tasmanian independent schools coped with the gender related challenges they faced in their profession. Viewed through the lens of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994), this aim was underpinned by a desire to better understand the effects these challenges have on the retention of male primary teachers, and how the influences of these challenges might be moderated by coping efficacy. I sought to examine the lived experiences of practising male primary teachers so that successful and practical coping strategies could be identified that might then assist other males to persist within the profession.

1.2 Background

Male primary teachers can face numerous gender related challenges in their profession. Many of these challenges can be attributed to a societal perception that primary teaching is womens' work (Carrington, 2002; Mills et al., 2004; Moss-Racusin & Johnson, 2016). Men who choose to enter the female dominated primary teaching profession can experience suspicion in regards to their motivations and intentions. This scrutiny has made many men reluctant to work with young children, and contributed to the low, and falling number of male primary teachers (Foster & Newman, 2005; Johnson, 2008; Jones, 2007). The Schools Australia series produced annually by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) showed that the percentage of Australian primary teachers who are male has dropped from 30.24% in 1983 to 18.52% in 2015 (ABS, 2016). This downward trend is also visible in many other developed nations such as New Zealand (Cushman, 2008), the United Kingdom (General Teaching Council for England, 2010) and the United States (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013). Most importantly, the falling number of male primary teachers is a concern

for key stakeholders such as principals and parents (Cushman, 2008), many of whom believe that more men are required, both in the classroom and in the wider school environment.

Stakeholder concerns have prompted numerous calls for increased male recruitment to, and retention in, the primary teaching profession (e.g., Carrington, et al., 2007; Francis & Skelton, 2005; Martin & Marsh, 2005). These calls have cited a variety of reasons why more men are required in primary schools, yet more recent research (Bullough, 2015; McGrath & Sinclair, 2013) concluded that more male primary teachers are required primarily for social reasons. McGrath and Sinclair argued that all children could benefit from having more male primary school teachers to act as role models and father figures. Boys could additionally benefit from having a man to relate to, seek help from and confide in, especially in relation to issues such as puberty; whereas girls interaction with men, their consequent understanding of men and in turn their self-image might be positively influenced by their experiences with male teachers.

Educational authorities in countries such as Australia (Education Queensland, 2002), Canada (Ontario College of Teachers, 2004), New Zealand (Early Childhood Council, 2013), and the United Kingdom (Trent, 2015) have responded to calls for more men in primary schools by initiating policies designed to increase the numbers of male teachers. Despite the instigation of these recruitment focussed initiatives, the percentage of primary teachers who are male continues to fall (ABS, 2016). This trend suggests that more focus might need to be placed on the retention of male primary teachers already in the profession.

The realisation that teacher retention might be a more serious issue than teacher recruitment has become more accepted, with Brown and Schainker (2008) even going so far as to call teacher retention a “crisis” (p. 10). Even if recruitment strategies are highly successful, they will not increase male primary teacher numbers if these men do not remain in the profession. Ingersoll and Smith (2003) suggested this situation was similar to pouring

water into a bucket that has holes in it. The implication of this metaphor for this study is that in order to raise the water level (number of male primary teachers), the first step must be to fix the holes (retain existing male primary teachers).

The retention of existing male teachers might also improve the retention of new male teachers, as they will be able to act as mentors for these men (Bradley & Loadman, 2005). The coping skills of teachers have also been found to increase directly and consistently with age (Naylor & Malcolmson, 2001). If more experienced male teachers can be retained within the profession to act as mentors, younger men might be able to develop successful coping strategies for the gender related challenges they face, and consequently persist in the profession. In time they could act as mentors for the next wave of new male teachers, and contribute to the solving of this retention 'crisis'. This research project aimed to contribute to this solution through the identification of successful coping strategies that male primary teachers could use to deal with the gender related challenges they faced, and persist within their profession.

1.3 Significance of the Research Project

This exploratory project aimed to identify coping strategies that male primary teachers could use to confront gender related challenges, and understand how coping efficacy moderated the influence of these challenges. Numerous studies have investigated issues concerned with the recruitment of more men to the profession (e.g., Cushman 2005a; Hutchings et al., 2008; Skelton, 2009), as well as specific gender related challenges such as fear and uncertainty surrounding making physical contact with students (e.g., Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Cushman, 2007; Smith, 2008). There is much less attention given to retaining these men once they begin their teaching career and start to experience these challenges. Lent, Brown, and Hackett (2000) stated that a change in perspective, from deficits

(challenges) to assets (supports and strategies) could have positive implications for people struggling with work related challenges. Researchers have noted some coping strategies male primary teachers can use (e.g., King, 2000; Smith, 2008), yet the majority of discussion on strategies has primarily focused on recruitment and directed at those with a higher level of influence. These strategies include ideas such as positive discrimination of males into teaching courses, scholarships, quota systems, and targeted advertising (Cushman, 2007). There is much less evidence of practical coping strategies that male primary teachers could utilise at an individual level to overcome these challenges and persist in the profession. This was a key focus on this study.

This study has examined male primary teachers and the gender related challenges they face through the lens of SCCT (Lent et al., 1994). SCCT highlights the complex interactions between people, their behaviour, and their environments, and can provide direction for research aimed at increasing our knowledge about the career choices of male primary teachers. More specifically, how these decisions are affected by gender related challenges, coping strategies and coping efficacy. SCCT has been used to study teachers' work satisfaction (i.e., Duffy & Lent, 2009; Lent et al., 2011), but these studies have used quantitative research methods and have not specifically focussed on either male primary teachers or challenges. Quantitative research methods might prove effective in answering some research questions, but the complexity of men facing contextual challenges in a non-gender traditional occupation requires more depth than can be obtained by these methods alone. Therefore this mixed methods study has also utilised qualitative methods, specifically semi-structured interviews.

1.4 Research Questions

This project was guided by the following research questions:

1. *What gender related challenges do Tasmanian male primary teachers face in their profession?*
2. *How do Tasmanian male primary teachers cope with the gender related challenges they face?*
    a. *Does coping efficacy moderate the influence of the gender related challenges faced by Tasmanian male primary teachers?*

1.5 Operational Definition of Concepts

These operational definitions have been adapted from definitions used within SCCT (Lent, 2012; Lent et al., 1994; Lent et al., 2000). As these concepts are defined within SCCT in a way that makes them suitable for a more general career context, they have been modified so that they are more specific to the male primary teacher focus of this study.

Tasmanian male primary teacher

All participants in this study were Tasmanian male primary teachers. In this study Tasmanian male primary teacher was defined as a man who taught within a Tasmanian non-government primary school.

Gender related challenge

In this study the concept of gender related challenge will be defined as a gender related issue that affects male teachers' experiences in the primary teaching profession.

Coping strategy

A coping strategy will be defined as a behaviour utilised by a male primary teacher to deal with a gender related challenge they face in their profession.

Coping efficacy

Coping efficacy can be considered as an individuals' beliefs regarding their capabilities to negotiate particular environmental challenges (Lent et al., 2000), and is distinctive from task or content-specific self-efficacy. In this study coping efficacy will be defined as a male primary teachers' beliefs regarding their ability to overcome the gender related challenges they face in their profession.

1.6 Context

Gender is a constant and inevitable presence within this research project. Skelton (2011) noted that many male primary teachers feel they have to focus on their gender because it is continually being attended to by others. This situation often entails them being seen as effective disciplinarians, sport coaches and role models for boys whilst conversely being perceived as potential paedophiles and consequently dangerous to children (Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Cushman, 2008; Martino 2008; Mills et al., 2008; Smith, 2008). These and numerous other studies (e.g., Bhana & Moosa, 2016; Cushman, 2007; Mills et al., 2004) have shown that gender is a powerful influence on a person's experiences as a primary school teacher. Of particular relevance to this study is how constructions of gender affected the behaviour and perceptions of Tasmanian male primary school teachers.

Traditional societal beliefs surrounding appropriate behaviour for men and women can influence the way people perform their jobs. These beliefs can create gendered double standards by positioning certain behaviours as appropriate for females, but not for males and vice versa. Identifying how these beliefs contributed to the construction of gender related challenges for male primary teachers has been well documented (e.g., Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Cushman 2005b; Mills et al., 2008; Skelton, 2011). Much of this qualitative research has utilised a poststructuralist feminist lens to deconstruct and critically examine issues of gender in primary school contexts. Utilising a more pragmatic approach, this exploratory

study sought to build on previous research in this area by focussing on the identification of practical coping strategies male primary teachers could use to deal with the gender related challenges they faced, and persist in the profession. This decision has influenced my choice of methodology, and the use of SCCT as a lens to analyse my data.

Research data does not necessarily speak for itself; it has to be interpreted. A researchers' interpretation of their data will inevitably be influenced by the various personal lenses they bring to their research. These lenses can include their cultural and social backgrounds, gender, as well as personal values and biases (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). It is important for researchers to communicate their background and how it may affect their interpretation of the data in their study. Researchers must first strive to understand their own positions and experiences before attempting to understand the experiences of others; "only then can we seek to understand how our idiosyncratic stories relate to the larger story unfolding all around us" (Leggo, 2008, p. 20). It is important, therefore, to acknowledge my own subjectivities and experiences in this research process. I have worked as a Health and Physical Education specialist in several different Tasmanian primary schools. In these various schools contexts I personally encountered gendered related challengs and found that often having few male colleagues or mentors impacted on my experience and job satisfaction. I was interested if this was also the case for other Tasmanian male primary classroom teachers.

As I had many shared experiences with participants I could be considered as an "insider" (Berger, 2015, p. 222). These experiences were advantageous as I had prior knowledge of the gender related challenges male primary teachers can face, and was familiar with the terminology participants used. This knowledge allowed me to gain trust and achieve rapport with participants more quickly because I could relate to the challenges they shared. I believe, as supported by Mruck and Mey (2007), that this insider status enabled a better understanding of participants' perceptions, and the ability to interpret their lived experiences

in a way that would have been difficult without that experience and knowledge. It is also important to acknowledge that I am also an 'outsider' in that I was a Health and Physical education specialist, and have never lived the life of a male primary school classroom teacher. My previous teaching experiences in Tasmania undoubtedly affected how I conducted this research and at specific points in this thesis I acknowledge where and how this occurred.

The context of this study was bound by one substantial constraint which it is important to acknowledge at this point. A major limitation of the initial quantitative phase of this mixed methods study was the low number of survey participants. These low participant numbers were primarily due to the Tasmanian Department of Education (DoE) not giving approval for their employees to participate in this study because it did not align with their literacy and numeracy specific research interests. Around 70% of the male primary teachers in Tasmania are employed by the DoE (ABS, 2016). To resolve this limitation I used a qualitative dominant mixed methods approach with male primary teachers in non-government independent schools. This approach was well suited to examining the gender related challenges faced by male primary teachers. The findings of this study might therefore not be reflective of, male primary teachers working in government schools. I will discuss the limitations of this study further in chapter eight and discuss any that arose during the study, as well.

1.7 Organisation

This thesis is organised into eight chapters. Chapter two contains a critical review of the literature surrounding SCCT, and the seminal and current literature on gender related challenges faced by male primary teachers. Chapter three outlines the methodology and research design for the study. Chapters four to seven present the findings and discussion

resulting from the analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data sets. Finally chapter eight summarises the key findings, and presents implications and recommendations for future research and practice.

Chapter 2

Critical Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Lent et al., 1994) is used as a lens to examine the gender related challenges that influence the retention of male primary teachers. I begin by providing an overview of the theory and suggest why it is an appropriate framework for examining how male primary teachers cope with the gender related challenges they face in their profession. I then argue that existing male primary school teachers might be able to cope with these challenges and persist in the profession because they have high coping efficacy and positive outcome expectations. Finally I examine how SCCT has been used to study both teachers, and people in gender non-traditional occupations, before detailing the aspects of SCCT which are relevant to this study and elaborating on them using relevant literature specific to male primary teachers. These aspects are contextual barriers, coping efficacy and persistence.

SCCT uses the term barrier rather than the term challenge. There are numerous national and international studies about the barriers male primary teachers face (e.g., Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Cushman 2007; White, 2011), yet studies also use a variety of other terms such as challenges, issues, influences and difficulties (e.g., Anliak & Beyazkurk, 2008, Foster & Newman, 2005, Trent, 2015). In the context of this study the term barrier is

somewhat problematic because it infers something that must be overcome. The term challenge much better encapsulates what is at stake for the male primary teachers in this study. The term challenge infers something that must be dealt with or worked through. The gender related challenges male primary teachers face in their profession are not simply overcome and forgotten. Rather, they are constantly being navigated and dealt with throughout teaching careers. For these reasons I will be using the term challenge in this research project.

2.2 Social Cognitive Career Theory

Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1986) highlighted the complex interactions between people, their behaviour, and their environments; specifically that personal, behavioural, and environmental factors influence one another in a bidirectional and reciprocal fashion. This influence outlines that a person's choices are a product of a continuous interaction between these factors. Bandura (2001) later proposed that people do have some ability to influence their own behaviour and environment, but this ability is moderated by contextual influences such as environmental supports and challenges that can affect the choices they make. This notion is very important to this research project as the presence of supports to help male primary teachers cope with the challenges they face might be an important aspect of them deciding to persist within the profession. Career choices such as persistence are only one of the types of behaviour Bandura was trying to understand through Social Cognitive Theory. Bandura was writing about the behaviour of people more generally, therefore this study used a more career specific version of Social Cognitive Theory. SCCT (Lent et al., 1994) is aimed at understanding career interest development, choice-making, performance and persistence, satisfaction and self-management.

Following the publication of SCCT, Lent and his colleagues have produced an extensive body of empirical (e.g., Duffy & Lent, 2009; Lent et al., 2001; 2002; 2005; 2007; 2011) and non empirical (e.g., Lent, 2012; Lent & Brown, 2006; Lent et al., 1994; 2000) literature to further explain it, and test its key premises. Empirical studies have primarily focused on linking variables such as interests and choice goals (Lent et al., 2005), self efficacy and work satisfaction (Duffy & Lent, 2009; Lent et al., 2007; 2011) and the influences of challenges and supports on career choices (Lent et al., 2001; 2002). These studies have used quantitative methods to indicate SCCT is a good predictor of career behaviour, and have since been supported by other empirical research (e.g., Byers-Winston & Fouad, 2008; Fisher, Gushue & Cerrone, 2011; Soldner, Rowan-Kenyon, Inkelas, Garvey & Robbins, 2012). These studies will be presented throughout this chapter where appropriate. Before this occurs, the non empirical publications will be used to explain SCCT in more detail and justify its suitability for this study.

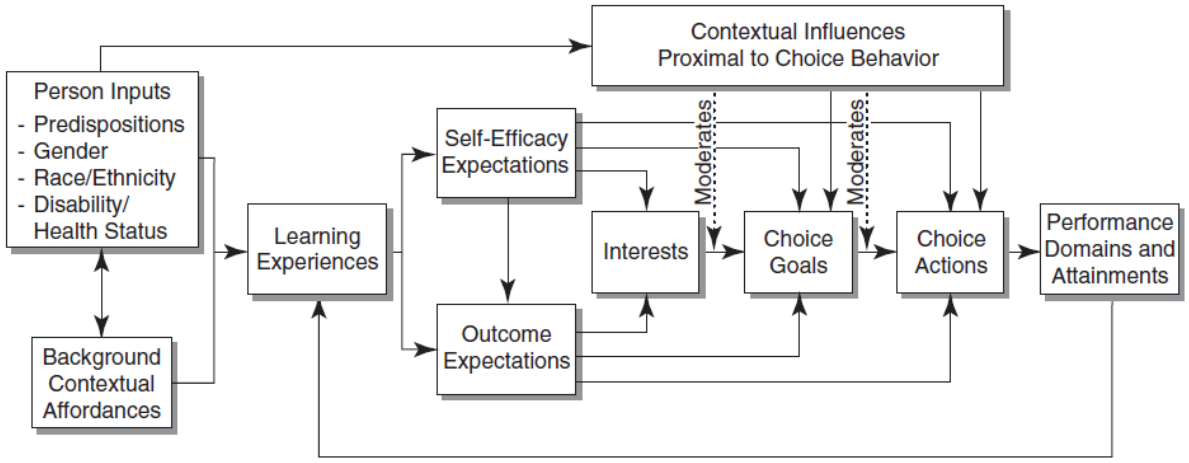


Figure 2.1. Social cognitive career theory (Lent, 2012).

SCCT includes several key premises regarding peoples' work behaviours. Lent et al. (2000) stated that an individual's beliefs regarding their capability to negotiate particular environmental challenges might moderate the relationship between these challenges and career choices or goals, such as persisting at their chosen career. This relationship is highly

relevant to this research in light of Cushman's (2007) statement that the low number of male primary teachers was because they have to deal with numerous gender related challenges, such as social isolation and uncertainty surrounding physical contact. SCCT can assist in identifying how male primary teachers can deal with these gender related challenges by providing a framework in which ways to increase coping efficacy and reduce the ability of challenges to negatively influence career choices can be designed. This framework might increase male primary teachers' ability to be successful in their career choices, such as persisting within their profession.

A person's career choices are influenced by three cognitive-person variables: self-efficacy, outcomes expectations and goals (Lent et al., 1994). These three cognitive-person variables partly enable an individual to have control over their career development. Within each of these variables, there are links between an individual's context and their occupational choices. Moreover, within each variable, background contextual and environment factors help to determine career choice and development. These variables will now be discussed.

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's beliefs about their ability to perform specific career behaviours ("Can I do this?") (Lent et al., 2005). These self-beliefs are linked to particular career related tasks and activities. An individual might, for example, have strong self-efficacy beliefs regarding their ability to teach children, but feel less confident about their ability to develop relationships with colleagues. These beliefs are dynamic and are affected by personal experiences and environmental conditions. Bandura (1977) believed that expectations of self-efficacy can help predict an individual's persistence at their chosen profession, and stated that self-efficacy beliefs are acquired and modified via four primary informational sources or types of learning experience. These four sources are (1) personal performance accomplishments, (2) vicarious learning, (3) social persuasion, and (4) physiological and affective states. The influence of each of these sources is dependent on

factors such as individual interpretation. Lent (2012) stated that prior performance accomplishments are often the strongest influence, with success at a given task leading to strong self-efficacy beliefs in relation to it.

Whereas self-efficacy beliefs focus on capabilities, outcome expectations refer to an individual's beliefs about the consequences of certain actions ("If I do this, what will happen?"). Bandura (1986) described three different types of outcome expectations; the anticipation of physical, (e.g., monetary), social (e.g., approval of significant others), or self-evaluative (e.g., self-satisfaction) outcomes. He believed that self-efficacy and outcome expectations both help an individual to make choices about important aspects of their life such as the activities they want to pursue and the ones they wish to avoid. Self-efficacy and outcome expectations function in collaboration with other aspects of an individual and their environment, such as contextual challenges, in order to influence career choices and goals.

Goals refer to an individual's determination to engage in a particular activity or produce a particular result ("How much do I want to do this?") (Lent et al., 2005). SCCT is primarily concerned with two types of goals, (a) choice-content goals, referring to the type of activity domain one wishes to pursue, and (b) performance goals, that is, the level of performance an individual wants to achieve within that domain. Lent and Brown (2006) noted that choice goals motivate people to pursue their preferred professions whereas performance goals help determine the level of success they achieve. Choice actions are behaviours related to achieving these goals. For example, for the choice goal of becoming a primary teacher, the resultant choice action would be applying to a university faculty of education to train as a primary teacher. The choice goal is the cognitive component of thinking about becoming a primary teacher; choice actions are the steps an individual takes towards implementing this goal. A key assumption within SCCT (Lent, 2012) is that people

are more likely to implement career choices by translating their goals into actions if they perceive and experience strong supports and weak challenges to their goal pursuit.

Factors such as contextual challenges and supports, personal attributes, and socialisation experiences interact with these three person-cognitive variables to help shape career choice and development. Over time, these interactions make certain career paths more or less attractive for an individual. Lent et al. (1994) suggested that interest in a career is likely to endure when people believe they are competent (self-efficacious) at the activity and anticipate positive outcomes. Potential occupations might be rejected due to low efficacy beliefs and negative outcome expectations. Existing male primary school teachers might have high self-efficacy and outcome expectations and thus choose to remain in the profession. Investigating how and what male primary teachers do to modify their self-efficacy and outcome expectations is a key focus of this research. This investigation was done primarily through the choice model of SCCT.

2.2.1 The Choice Model of SCCT

Within SCCT, Lent (2012) described distinct but overlapping models that aim to create a unifying framework for explaining how people (a) develop career interests, (b) make occupational choices, (c) achieve high career performance or success, (d) experience occupational satisfaction, and (e) self-manage their careers. This research project was conceptually framed within the choice model. This model provides the best opportunity for examining the choices of Tasmanian male primary teachers; particularly the influence of challenges on these choices, and how these men choose their coping strategies in order to persist within their profession. As identifying these challenges and the strategies male primary teachers used to deal with them and remain in the profession is a key aim of this research, the choice model was the logical choice.

Lent et al. (2000) posited that career choice is preceded by the development of self-efficacy, outcome expectations, interests, and skills. Career choices are viewed as a set of dynamic processes; choices are made, but are subject to future revision because individuals and their environments are dynamic entities. Lent et al. (1994) hypothesised that choice making is divided into three component parts: (1) choosing to enter a particular field such as primary teaching, (2) taking actions such as enrolling in a university teacher education course, and (3) subsequent success and failures resulting from these actions that form a feedback loop affecting future choices. This research project is specifically interested in the third of these components as this stage involves choices made once individuals have already entered their chosen profession. This study of male primary teachers has a strong focus on the successes and failures they have, and how these successes and failures influence them choosing to persist in their profession.

Within the choice model, persistence is defined in terms of choice stability; whether or not an individual continues on specific career choice paths, especially when they encounter challenges (Lent, 2012). Persistence is influenced by abilities, self-efficacy, outcome expectations, and goals. These factors are developed within individuals' unique social contexts and are therefore interact with factors such as career challenges, social supports, and gender role socialisation. These factors are likely to interact in most workplaces, however the unique situation created by men working in a gender non-traditional profession such as primary teaching warrants further investigation.

2.2.2 Gender Non-traditional Professions

The coping model of SCCT is more concerned with investigating the social effects of gender than with viewing sex as a physical or biological factor to be categorised (Lent, 2012). Gender is believed to link to career development in several important ways. These links include the reactions individuals evoke from their social-cultural environment, and how it

affects the opportunity structure to which they are exposed. Lent suggests that the effects of individual variables such as gender on career interests and choices might be influenced by socialisation experiences. Saifuddin, Dyke and Rasouli (2013) surveyed undergraduate engineering students in Bangladesh (*N*=849) and noted that gender role socialisation tends to bias the access that boys and girls have to the experiences necessary for them to develop strong efficacy beliefs and positive expectations in relation to particular professions. This finding might help to explain why individuals are more likely to develop skills and interests, along with high self-efficacy and outcome expectations at tasks that are culturally defined as gender appropriate. Over time these influential socially constructed experiences encourage the continued gender segregation of certain professions such as primary teaching.

The majority of SCCT research on gender non-traditional occupations has focused on women embarking on science, technology, engineering and maths careers (e.g., Byers-Winston & Fouad, 2008; Lent et al., 2008). One of the few studies specifically applying SCCT to males and gender non-traditional careers is that of Flores, Navarro, Smith and Ploszaj (2006). The authors used a quantitative survey to investigate Mexican American adolescent men's (*N*=302) career choice goals and found that their non-traditional career self-efficacy was predicted by parental support and the traditionality of their fathers' career. The results indicated that if there were high levels of parental support and their father had a gender non-traditional career, adolescent men were more likely to choose a gender non-traditional career pathway. These results therefore suggest that young men with fathers employed in professions such as nursing or primary teaching might be more likely to also consider a gender non-traditional occupation. This study will add to the SCCT literature by examining the experiences of men working in the female dominated primary teaching profession.

Despite concern about the low numbers of male primary teachers (e.g., McGrath & Sinclair, 2013) there has been no research conducted on this topic using SCCT. The only research utilising SCCT to research men in gender non-traditional careers has related to nursing. This research is relevant to this study because nursing and primary teaching are both large female dominated occupations. Julian (2011) used focus groups of men (*N*=27) with military health care experience to investigate their perceptions of nursing as a career option. Julian's findings included men being discouraged because of inadequate compensation, low respect and prestige, and societal norms regarding gender appropriate careers. These findings are echoed in male primary teacher research (e.g., Foster & Newman, 2005, Moss-Racusin & Johnson, 2016; Rentzou, 2016) that has been conducted without using SCCT. Despite the entry of some men and women into non-traditional occupations, societal stereotyping continues to divide work along gender lines. Deviating from traditional gender career choices can often result in individuals being perceived negatively by a society that does not consider their choices to be socially acceptable. This research used SCCT to investigate these choices in relation to male primary teachers.

The majority of studies using the SCCT framework to examine career choices have focused on one or more of the three main individual cognitive variables; self-efficacy, outcomes expectations and goals (e.g., Brown et al., 2011; Lent et al., 2001). This has resulted in less focus on other important premises of SCCT such as the effect of social and contextual variables. Career choice and career stability are continually being affected by both the environment's receptiveness to the individual and the individual's judgments about their ability to meet their occupational requirements. These variables influence choice in addition to interest. Sheu et al. (2010) conducted a meta-analysis of 226 studies published between 1981 and 2008 that had investigated the relationship of choice goals to their predictors. The authors observed that environmental factors had a strong influence in deciding what people

do and how long they persist at it for. Of particular interest to this study are contextual challenges, which are the actual or perceived environmental factors that affect an individual's ability to persist at their career choices.

2.2.3 Contextual Challenges

Within all career pathways there are external challenges that affect peoples' ability to persist in their chosen career. Lent et al. (2000) noted that highlighting the contextual factors that limit career development might have benefits such as helping to clarify the processes by which these challenges become accepted and internalized, as well as developing strategies for coping with them. Career challenges can be considered as events or conditions within an individual or their environment, which make career choices or career progress difficult (Swanson & Woitke, 1997). These challenges are considered to be contextual variables because they exist outside of a person's cognitive processing and are shaped within that person's unique environment or context. These external contextual challenges are regarded as being different to variables such as low self-efficacy which SCCT classifies as a personal factor or variable. Contextual variables might affect a person's ability to persist in their chosen career, with Lent (2012) noting that people are more likely to implement their career choices if they experience strong contextual supports and weak challenges in relation to their preferred career paths. The low and falling number of male primary teachers indicates that this situation might not be what these men experience.

SCCT further defines these contextual influences as being one of two dichotomous challenge types; either distal or proximal to choosing and persisting within a profession (Lent, 2012). Distal contextual variables refer to the interaction between individuals' background variables such as age and gender, and their environments, in the shaping of their interests and self-efficacy. These distal factors might include contextual variables such as family support, role model exposure and cultural socialisation. Proximal contextual variables

consider the continual effects of environmental and social influences on individuals' career choices. These variables are encountered during active phases of career decision making, such as deciding to persist in an occupation. They might include perceived and actual social support, sexism, and other social challenges (Byars-Winston & Fouad, 2008; Lent et al., 2007). This research project considered both proximal and distal challenges, as both are important components for understanding the process of career development and persistence. The focus was on proximal contextual challenges due to the negative effects they can have on career choice and persistence, and the possibility for supports or coping strategies to be developed to help deal with them.

Regardless of the challenge type, SCCT promotes the further examination of specific challenges (and supports) that can discourage (or encourage) career development. This approach is designed to isolate predictive relationships and identify opportunities to intervene. The theory includes a set of steps to help individuals cope with challenges and build supports and coping strategies (Lent, 2012). These steps include (a) anticipating possible challenges to implementing their choices, (b) analysing the likelihood of experiencing these challenges, (c) developing challenge coping strategies, and (d) building supports for their goals within their personal networks. Lent stated that anticipating challenges to their preferred career choices, and preparing coping strategies to help overcome them, might lead to individuals being more likely to persist toward their career choices. This study will complete all of these steps in order to examine the influence of these challenges on the career choices of Tasmanian male primary teachers.

Previous SCCT research has investigated the effects of challenges on career choices (e.g., Byars-Winston & Fouad, 2008; Lent et al., 2001; 2007; Lindley, 2005; Oetting, 2008). These studies have primarily focussed on surveying undergraduate students pursuing maths and science careers. These studies offer valuable insights, yet it could be argued that they are

in fact exploring perceived challenges, as their participants have not yet entered their chosen occupation and experienced actual challenges as working professionals. As many career challenges and supports are highly specific to professional contexts, participants should have some experience working in those professions before they are asked to detail the effects of these challenges on their career choices.

Some SCCT research has explored the effects of contextual challenges with working adult populations (e.g., Fisher et al., 2011; Perrone, Civiletto, Webb, & Fitch, 2004). Fisher et al. surveyed sexual minority women (*N*=381) and determined that their career aspirations were positively influenced by support from their friends and family. Perrone et al. surveyed college graduates (*N*=113) and found that coping efficacy had a mediating effect on the relationship between career challenges and career outcome expectations. Neither of these studies involved male primary teachers, yet findings surrounding the importance of strong supports and coping efficacy could be relevant to the participants in this research project.

The small amount of SCCT research involving teachers (i.e., Duffy & Lent, 2009; Lent et al., 2011) has focussed on work satisfaction rather than challenges, and has investigated both male and female teachers. Duffy and Lent surveyed a group of American teachers (*N*=366) and noted that individuals who were confident they could accomplish their work related tasks and goals, had a positive outlook, and felt supported by their school, tended to be the most satisfied with their work. In a similar study Lent et al. surveyed a group of Italian teachers (*N*=235) and found that work satisfaction could be predicted by positivity and perceptions of fairness and support in relation to their school environments. The findings of these studies suggest that teacher work satisfaction is strongly influenced by their colleagues willingness and capacity to support them and acknowledge their contributions. This finding is highly relevant to this study because work satisfaction has been found to be crucial for teacher retention (Kyriacou, Kunc, Stephens, & Hultgren, 2003). Lent and Brown

(2006) stated that environmental influences such as support from leaders and colleagues are an important factor in determining work satisfaction. Their comments suggest that if male primary teachers perceive they have strong support from their school communities they might have higher levels of work satisfaction, and may be more likely to persist in the primary teaching profession.

Investigations of contextual challenges and persistence utilising SCCT have predominantly used a quantitative approach. Quantitative methods might prove effective in answering some research questions, but the complexity of contextual challenges men face in non-gender traditional occupations requires more depth than can be obtained by these methods alone (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This study therefore utilised a mixed methods approach that incorporated a purposefully designed survey to measure a sample of the population, before creating targeted, semi structured interviews. These interviews were used to examine the influence of contextual challenges and coping strategies on the career choices made by Tasmanian non-government male primary teachers, through the lens of SCCT.

2.3 Functional and Dysfunctional Coping Strategies

Coping is a broad concept and numerous distinctions have been made between the different ways people cope and the different coping strategies they use. Effective coping can enable individuals to resolve problems, relieve emotional distress, and persist within their career. Identifying effective and ineffective ways of coping is therefore likely to inform efforts to improve individuals' coping skills (Brown, Westbrook, & Challagalla, 2005). SCCT (Lent et al., 1994) does not include information on discerning between good and bad, or functional and dysfunctional coping strategies. Therefore in this study I will compare participant strategies to the work of seminal coping researchers (Carver, 1997; Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989; Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010; Carver & Scheier, 2004) to

determine their functionality. I am not intending to critique this literature, rather this additional layer of analysis was included to add depth to the discussion of coping strategies, in parallel to my analysis using SCCT.

Carver has published a comprehensive body of coping related literature over the past few decades (e.g., Carver, 1997; Carver, Scheier & Weintraub, 1989; Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010; Carver & Scheier, 2004). This literature has been extensively cited by researchers from a wide variety of teaching and non teaching contexts (e.g., Bose, Bjorling, Elfstrom, Persson, & Saboonichi, 2015; Cooper, Katona, & Livingston, 2008; Doron, Trouillet, Gana, Boiche, Neveu, & Ninot, 2014; Foley & Murphy, 2015; Hastings et al., 2005). Many of these studies have utilised the brief coping orientation to problems experienced scale (Brief COPE; Carver, 1997). This scale was developed to assess situational and dispositional coping styles. It was used in this study of male primary teachers because it explicitly distinguishes between functional and dysfunctional coping strategies, and has high reliability and validity (Cooper et al., 2008). Carver classified coping strategies as being either problem focused or emotion focused. Problem focused coping is directed at the challenge itself; taking steps to remove it, or reduce its impact if it cannot be avoided. For example, actively planning about what steps to take to remove a challenge. Emotion focused coping is aimed at minimizing the distress caused by the challenge. For example, making fun of the situation or reframing it to make it seem more positive. These strategies are detailed in Figure 2.2 below.

Emotion focused strategies
Acceptance (accepting the reality that it has happened/ learning to live with it)
Emotional support (getting emotional support/comfort and understanding)
Humour (making jokes about it/ making fun of the situation)
Positive reframing (trying to see it in a different light, make it seem more positive/ look for something good in it)
Religion (finding comfort in religious or spiritual beliefs/ praying or meditating)
Problem focused strategies
Active coping (concentrating my efforts on doing something about the situation I'm in/ taking action to try to make it better)
Instrumental support (getting help and advice from other people/ trying to get advice or help from others about what to do)
Planning (trying to come up with a strategy about what to do/ thinking hard about what steps to take)
Dysfunctional coping strategies
Behavioral disengagement (giving up trying to deal with it/ the attempt to cope)
Denial (saying to myself "this isn't real" /refusing to believe that it has happened)
Self-distraction (turning to work or other activities to take my mind off things/ doing something to think about it less)
Self-blame (criticizing myself/ blaming myself for things that happened)
Substance use (using alcohol or other drugs to make myself feel better/to help me get through it)
Venting (saying things to let unpleasant feelings escape/ expressing negative feelings)

Figure 2.2. The brief COPE (Carver, 1997).

Some strategies can fit into both categories depending on the intent of the user (Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010). For example, seeking support is emotion focused if the goal is to obtain emotional support and reassurance, but problem focused if the goal is to obtain advice or instrumental help. Problem and emotion focused coping strategies can also facilitate each another. Effective problem focused coping reduces a challenge and therefore also reduces the distress caused by the challenge. Effective emotion focused coping reduces negative distress, making it possible to consider the challenge more calmly, which might result in better problem focused coping (Lazarus, 2006). This interrelatedness of these strategies makes it more useful to think of them as complementary coping functions rather than as two distinct coping categories.

Within these coping functions it is also important to distinguish between functional, or engagement coping strategies; and dysfunctional, or disengagement coping strategies. Carver and Connor-Smith (2010) stated that this distinction has the greatest importance to determining the success of a strategy. Functional coping includes problem focused coping and some forms of emotion focused coping. It is aimed at dealing directly with the challenge and can include strategies such as support seeking, acceptance, and positive reframing.

Dysfunctional coping is aimed at escaping the challenge or related emotions, and is often emotion focused because it involves an attempt to escape feelings of distress. These strategies can include avoidance and denial. Disengagement coping is generally ineffective in decreasing distress over the long term, as it does not reduce the challenge's existence or its eventual impact (Najmi & Wegner 2008). The classification of strategies in this study is primarily aimed at identifying successful, functional coping strategies that can be used by male primary teachers to help them cope with the gender related challenges they face in their profession.

2.4 The Gender Related Challenges Faced by Male Primary Teachers

Men can face numerous contextual challenges if they decide to pursue a career as a primary teacher. These gender related challenges include low salaries, the profession's low status, and issues around working with young children (Cushman, 2007), and are likely to have contributed to the low numbers of men teaching in primary schools. Cushman is an influential and highly cited researcher in male primary teacher literature. She acknowledged in her 2007 article that predominantly using her own previous studies (e.g., Cushman, 2005a, Cushman 2005b) for this literature review might have limitations; therefore in the following section I incorporated a more robust representation of the national and international literature in this area. This literature review will include more contemporary research findings that might have emerged since Cushman's work was published (e.g., Brownhill, 2014; Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; McGrath & Sinclair, 2013; Mistry & Sood, 2015; Skelton, 2011; White, 2011). More specifically, I examined the societal perceptions of male primary teachers before scrutinising how schools perpetuate these gendered beliefs and roles. Finally I elucidated the fear and uncertainty experienced by male teachers as a result of these challenges. Moving

from an external to an internal viewpoint might help to better explain these challenges and their effects on the retention of male primary teachers.

2.4.1 Societal Perceptions of Male Primary Teachers

A societal perception that primary teaching is a female profession continues to influence the number of men who choose to enter, and remain in the profession. Previous research has suggested that male primary teachers have to deal with societal suspicions of being gay because they have chosen to work with women, and/or being paedophiles because of their choice to work with children (Gosse, 2011; Mills et al., 2004; Smith, 2008). Smith noted that her interviews with male pre-service teachers (*N*=6) and her discourse analysis of the Australian media between 1994 and 2004 provided substantial evidence that male primary school teachers are disadvantaged because society views them as being potentially sexually deviant and therefore dangerous to children. These results are supported by studies in the United Kingdom (Jones, 2007) and Canada (Bernard, Hill, Falter, & Wilson, 2004) who found that all men in the primary teaching profession are perceived as high risk and likely deal with constant suspicion. These perceptions might cause males to believe that they are under continuous surveillance, which can have a strong negative effect on both their personal and professional lives.

More recent research has indicated that these perceptions have not changed in the past decade. Petersen (2014) surveyed South African pre-service primary teachers (*N*=230) and noted there was an "uncomfortable tension between the 'good,' the 'bad', and the 'ugly'" (p. 1) in relation to perspectives of male teachers working with young children. The 'good' was reflected in about 5% of participants recognising that male teachers could serve as role models and father figures for young children with absentee fathers. The 'bad' was revealed by the approximately 15% of participants who provided numerous reasons for why men were unsuitable to teach young children. The strong association between men and perceived threats

of sexual abuse and molestation represented the remaining 'ugly' perception. This conflation could be attributed to increased media coverage and public awareness of high profile cases concerning physical and sexual abuse of children by men. These overwhelmingly negative perceptions in Petersen's study are concerning because they indicate the existence of gendered double standards in terms of suitability for working with young children. It would appear that young teacher education students, and the communities in which they live, continue to be influenced by traditional constructions of gender and masculinity. Until society accepts primary school teaching as a suitable career for males these men are likely to continue to face constant questioning and disapproval, which might lead to more men choosing to leave the profession.

Male primary teachers facing disapproval from the wider community for choosing to work in a gender non-traditional profession often have to deal with similar disapproval from their friends and family. The New Zealand male primary teachers in Cushman's (2005a) focus groups (*N*=17) talked about their parents, particularly their fathers, considered teaching to be an unsuitable job for them. Similarly, the pre service and practising male primary teachers in Foster and Newman's (2005) focus groups (*N*=4) stated that friends had told them that they could do better than a career as a primary teacher. In contrast, Mulholland and Hansen (2003) interviewed recently graduated Australian male primary teachers (*N*=16) whose career choice had been supported by their parents but criticised by their friends. Interestingly, the authors attributed this support to the parents' own lack of education and unhappiness with their jobs that involved manual labour rather than a change in public perception. Male teachers' friends might have seen teaching as an unsuitable option because of ignorance in relation to what a teacher does, and more importantly, the fact they did not enjoy school as students. This disapproval is likely to decrease if a male's friends and family are teachers themselves, yet disapproval from society continues to be a challenge for male

primary teachers. This disapproval might be connected to societal perceptions that men should choose a profession with a more appropriate salary and status for them.

The low salary and status of primary teaching within society could be an influential contributor to the low number of men in the profession (Rentzou, 2016). Teachers' pay in Australia is dependent on qualifications and experiences rather than gender, yet it might be more of an issue for men because of the societal view that they should be their family's principal source of income (Johnson, 2008). Previous research (e.g., Cushman 2007; Smith, 2008) has noted that male primary teachers are frequently reminded that they are earning less than their male friends in other careers. The Department of Education, Science and Training recognised the lack of career structure, as evidenced by a salary plateau as being a reason for many teachers leaving the profession (Commonwealth of Australia, 2003). Their report is an important first step, but they are yet to act on this knowledge and the percentage of male primary teachers in Australia has continued to decline.

The low salaries of teachers might also be a contributor to the low status of teaching as a profession. Status is hard to measure, yet the Commonwealth of Australia (1998) noted that elements such as large financial rewards, being highly valued, and having specialised skills are strong contributors. It is possible that teachers are unvalued because society is not fully aware of the intellectual demands of the job, and believe that only people unable to achieve success in other areas become teachers. This belief has not been helped by archaic opinions continuing to appear in academic literature and mainstream media. Shaw's (1903) famous "those who can, do; those who can't, teach" was scripted in the popular 2003 Paramount film "School of Rock", and Waller's (1932, p.379) belief that teaching is only for "unsalable men and unmarriageable women" was expressed by commentators seven decades later (Gordon, 2000). As long as society continues to be presented with these attitudes, the status of teaching is unlikely to improve, particularly at the primary level.

The status of the primary teaching profession might be even lower than that of teaching in general. This low status could be linked to the declining numbers of males in primary teaching, as society often undervalues work done by women and assigns a lower status to professions in which women are numerically superior (Commonwealth of Australia, 1998). This report noted that men who move into female dominated areas are often seen to be stepping down and therefore encouraged to pursue careers with more appropriate status. Other research (e.g. Addi-Raccah, 2005; Allen, 1993) has similarly stated that male primary teachers are treated as gender role deviates and face social pressures to move from sex-atypical to sex-typical occupations. The genesis of these societal beliefs can be hard to identify, yet the community's views and opinions of teachers are likely to be strongly influenced by mainstream media.

Despite the media's frequent inaccuracies, it is still considered to reflect the dominant perceptions held by society (Freedman, 2002). Therefore if the media consistently portrays teachers in a negative light, societal perceptions of teachers are likely to suffer. Unfortunately this might be the reality, as the Commonwealth of Australia (1998) noted that the media coverage of schools and teachers was often negative, misleading and ill informed. They stated that media coverage consistently reinforced community stereotypes and prejudices, and failed to present a balanced perspective of the strengths and weaknesses of schools and teachers. The effect of the media repeatedly preferring to highlight the failures of schools and teachers rather than their achievements is a further degradation of the status of the teaching profession and continued low numbers of male primary teachers.

Along with negative media coverage this section has detailed the proximal contextual challenges evident in society that influence male primary teacher retention. These variables include challenges related to homosexuality and paedophilia (Bhana & Moosa, 2016; Mills et al., 2004; Smith, 2008), the disapproval of friends, family and society (Cushman, 2005a;

Foster & Newman, 2005; Mulholland & Hansen, 2003), and low salaries and status of the primary teaching profession (Commonwealth of Australia, 1998; Cushman 2007; Rentzou, 2016). These contextual challenges were drivers for the design of a survey instrument that was used to gain the opinions of a larger number of participants, before this data was examined in greater depth during the second interview stage of this study. Regardless of the fact that male primary teachers would be helped by more progressive societal views and a more positive depiction in the media, schools might need to take on a leadership role in helping men deal with the gender related challenges they face in their profession.

2.4.2 Schools Perpetuating Gendered Beliefs and Roles

Men who choose to become primary teachers in spite of negative societal perceptions often discover that they are also presented with additional challenges in their schools. Previous research has suggested that male primary teachers generally receive encouragement and support from their female colleagues (Kauppinen-Toropainen & Lammi, 1993) yet more recent research (e.g., Cushman, 2005a) has reported some contradictory evidence. Cushman stated that the schooling system continues to perpetuate traditional notions of masculinity. Her statement is consistent with the opinions of Connell (2002), who argued that primary schools have become organisations that have established what she calls a "gender regime" (p. 53). This term indicates that everyday practices in these schools are likely to reinforce a division between acceptable masculine and feminine roles. This division included expectations that men would fulfil roles associated with management, discipline and physical activity, and avoid those roles requiring the nurturing of young children. Some men are undoubtedly attracted to these management roles because they offer a higher salary and are seen as more appropriate for men. Evidence for this notion can be found in the "Staff in Australia's Schools 2010" report by the Australian Council for Educational Research (McKenzie, Rowley, Weldon, & Murphy, 2012), which estimated that 57% of the principals

and 43% of the deputy principals in Australian primary schools were male. These numbers are both substantially larger than the percentage of men in primary schools (ABS, 2016) and suggest that the expectations Cushman mentions do impact the career decisions of these men. These decisions might also be influenced by a strong awareness of the societal perceptions detailed in the previous section. In addition to these leadership roles, men can also be expected to take on particular roles in their schools, even when their female colleagues are actually more successful in these positions.

Male teachers have consistently described the expectation for them to be the school disciplinarian (e.g., Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Mills et al., 2008; Mills et al., 2004; Sargent, 2000). This expectation can also result in men regularly having more difficult children assigned to their classes (Gosse, 2011). If males are given classes with more boys and more behaviour problems, then they are likely to end up in a "self-fulfilling prophecy" (Sargent, 2000, p. 424) where they are forced to spend more time on discipline issues and are therefore seen as being more authoritarian than their female colleagues. Sargent interviewed American primary school teachers (N=23) and noted that being assigned all the discipline problems can make for difficult working conditions. These difficult working conditions can overwhelm some men, evidenced by the Australian male primary teacher in the case study of Mills et al. 'John' left the teaching profession after only one year because he was unable to cope with the expectations his school placed on him. These expectations included roles in addition to being the school disciplinarian and can noticeably increase the workload of a male primary teacher.

These additional roles seem to be what Skelton (2009, p. 42) described as "masculine" roles. They include manual labour, coaching sports teams and being responsible for subjects such as physical education and computing, and are typically assigned to men (Mills et al., 2004). Interestingly, it appears that some schools might recruit male teachers with these roles in mind. Cushman (2008) observed that in order to provide students,

particularly boys, with positive male role models, school principals (*N*=250) of both genders in New Zealand tended to favour men who demonstrated traditional forms of masculinities such as those found within the national sport of rugby. These characteristics included being strong, reliable and good humoured, and give weight to Martino's (2008) view that sport is a masculine pursuit and an important part of being a "real" (p. 207) man. Smith (2008) similarly found that expectations of male primary school teachers position them as "sporty, fun, manly, father substitutes" (p. 7). This school expectation might be a challenge for those male primary teachers who are not interested or good at sport, yet Smith noted that many men are willing to fulfil these roles as long as they can share them with other males in the school. This scenario might seem quite manageable, yet these gendered expectations are likely to become more difficult and time consuming for men working in schools with few or no other male teachers. The reality of the low number of male primary teachers at present is that many men are in exactly this position.

Male primary teachers have explicitly commented on the increased pressure and workload caused by the declining number of male primary teachers. Smith's (2008) interview participants specifically stated the low and falling number of male teaching colleagues placed extra burdens on remaining male teachers and worsened other pre-existing problems such as isolation. In addition to previously mentioned roles such as behaviour management and manual labour, these men were expected to attend more of the school excursions and camps in order to meet the required ratio of accompanying males. This expectation resulted in these men having more time away from their families, friends and personal hobbies. In these situations schools might need to be aware that expectations for their male teachers to perform additional masculine roles are just increasing the workload of these men and highlighting how isolated they are.

Social isolation is a commonly mentioned challenge for male primary teachers. Previous research (e.g., Ashcraft & Sevier, 2006; Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Cushman, 2005b, Smith, 2008) has noted that male primary teachers often find themselves in a school where their colleagues are female, usually the same age as their mother, and with their only male colleagues being the groundsman and possibly the principal. Male primary teachers struggle to develop positive professional relationships with these colleagues because of a lack of common ground. This situation has resulted in male teachers feeling a "profound sense of isolation" (Ashcraft & Sevier, 2006, p.131), and stating that they prefer to spend their break times in their office alone or in the playground with students, rather than in the staffroom with their female colleagues (Smith, 2008). The male primary teachers in Cushman's focus groups (*N*=17) and Ashcraft and Sevier's interviews (*N*=14) both commented on the staffroom as being one of the places where gender differences are often highlighted. Participants stated that they often felt excluded, as the conversations of their female colleagues were primarily around feminine interests such as children, relationships and clothing; and that they often got a hard time if they joined the conversation and tried to steer it towards more common interests. This situation is likely to make male primary teachers feel increasingly isolated, and aware of their minority status within their schools.

Another common issue related to social isolation is older female teachers trying to "mother" (Cushman, 2005b, p. 233) young males and treating them like children. This situation contributed to the difficulty of developing positive professional relationships with their colleagues. The male primary teachers (*N*=18) interviewed for Burn and Pratt-Adam's (2015) study also identified this scenario. Most of Cushman's participants saw their interactions with their female colleagues as being "more amusing than anything else" (p. 8), but this mentality is unlikely the case for all male primary teachers. If female teachers do not develop an awareness of the effects of their behaviours in regard to gender stereotyping, there

is little chance of the staffroom becoming a more comfortable place for male staff. Examining the level to which female teachers perpetuate societal gender stereotypes is an important aspect of addressing the social isolation faced by male primary teachers in schools.

The two key proximal contextual challenges highlighted in this section are social isolation (Ashcraft & Sevier, 2006; Cushman, 2005b) and the expectation to perform masculine roles (Cushman, 2008; Mills et al., 2008). This study specifically focused on how male primary teachers deal with these contextual challenges so that they can persist in their profession. These challenges were also used to create survey questions to ask participants. The second interview stage of this study then examined in greater depth the role that schools have in the creation of these challenges. This depth is vitally important as the cumulative effect of having to deal with their school communities reinforcing negative societal perceptions of male primary teachers is that these men can be very fearful and uncertain in their roles.

2.4.3 Fear and Uncertainty

Many male primary teachers feel they cannot comfort a young child like a parent or female teacher could, without putting themselves at risk. Previous research (Gosse, 2011) surveyed Canadian male primary teachers (*N*=223) and noted that they were very reluctant to interact with their students in ways that many women would consider accepted ways of nurturing their young pupils. Similarly, Szwed's (2010) focus groups with pre-service teachers (*N*=75) in the United Kingdom highlighted the anxiety that male primary teachers experience when faced with situations in which they want to show care and compassion to their students through physical contact but are concerned about the possible ramifications. Szwed noted that this uncertainty can often be less about the contact itself, and more to do with worrying about what adults walking past their classroom might think if they saw a male teacher reassuring a child with a hug. These findings are consistent with numerous other

studies on male primary teachers (e.g., Ashcraft & Sevier, 2006; Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Cooney & Bittner, 2001; Cushman, 2005b; Mills et al., 2008), which indicated that this is a challenge for many men. Adding to this uncertainty Cushman highlighted that very few schools have physical contact policies to assist new teachers, particularly men, to know where to set their boundaries. She further noted that in the rare cases where schools do give direction on this topic, the advice is frequently followed by males and ignored by females. This situation appears to set an obvious double standard, which might be contributed to by male teachers being more worried about being falsely accused of sexual abuse.

Male teachers can be extremely fearful of the possibility of being falsely accused of sexual abuse. Cushman (2005b) observed that 67% of her focus group participants (*N*=17) rated the fear of being falsely accused of child abuse as a moderate or extreme concern. This high percentage, and similar findings from Ashcraft and Sevier's (2006) interview participants (*N*=14) suggested that this issue is a noteworthy challenge for many men. We should be cautious of these findings due to the low participant numbers in these studies, yet these feelings seem to also be evident in pre-service male primary teachers. For example, Australian male pre-service primary teachers (*N*=8) reported avoiding all forms of physical contact, even when comforting a student, and wondered if it was worth going through four years of study when one incident could destroy your career (Lewis, Butcher, & Donnan, 1999). Despite the majority of cases resulting in the accused teachers being cleared of any wrongdoing, their reputations, careers, self-esteem and health are often irreparably damaged (Commonwealth of Australia, 1998). If male teachers avoid physical contact because of fear and uncertainty they might be role modelling to students that appropriate behaviour for men does not include the caring and nurturing they see from their female teachers.

The need for more men to provide positive role models for boys is a frequently cited argument for an increase in the number of male primary teacher (e.g., Brownhill, 2014;

McGrath & Sinclair, 2013). Smith (2008) similarly noted that male primary school teachers are frequently expected to act as role models and even surrogate fathers for their students. Males have identified being a positive role model as one of their motivations for becoming a teacher (Szwed, 2010), but paradoxically, meeting the demands of these societal expectations can be a key challenge for men. The male primary teacher in Cushman's (2005b) study revealed that they constantly scrutinised their attitudes and behaviours. They primarily did this because they believed their students were likely to link these behaviours to the male gender, as there were often no other male teachers in the school to compare them to. Female primary teachers also act as role models to their students, but their higher numbers give students many different options of appropriate female behaviour to imitate. These higher numbers are likely to significantly reduce the pressure on individual female teachers and make this issue much less of a challenge for them than for their male colleagues. The self-reflection being performed by these men is also likely to be intensified because of a lack of direction and information to guide them. Hutchings (2005) argued that the whole notion of the role model is "somewhat fuzzy" (p. 3), whereas Brownhill (2014) stated that over 80 different definitions of the term can be found in primary research findings. This confusion might make male teachers uncertain of exactly which characteristics they are expected to model, and consequently fearful of displaying the wrong characteristics.

There is minimal advice to assist male primary teachers in deciding if they should role model the traditional hegemonic masculinity prevalent in wider society or a caring approach more consistent with their female colleagues. Hegemonic masculinity can be understood as a representation of what men should be and do (Connell & Masserschmidt, 2005). Men can be expected to fulfil roles associated with management, and discipline, and avoid roles requiring the nurturing of young children. The difficulty of deciding on an appropriate approach is compounded by the variety of opinions found in literature. Brownhill (2014) used a mixed

methodology consisting of a survey (*N*=84), focus group (*N*=3) and interviews (*N*=6) and noted that there is a lot of tension between personality related qualities and characteristics, and those that are anticipated or enforced by others. Jones (2006) interviewed female teachers in the United Kingdom (*N*=13) who believed that macho was one of the four main qualities required by the "right kind" (p. 71) of male teacher. She later (Jones, 2007) interviewed pre-service male teachers (*N*=18) and noted that male teachers are often characterised as either "super-heroes" or "demons" (p. 186). The super-heroes are those men who exhibit the "right mix of characteristics" (p. 191). These characteristics are those traditionally associated with men, such as self-discipline, rationality, and competitiveness. They are firm but fair disciplinarians; good at and interested in sports; and have a good sense of humour. Demons are those men who have the wrong amount of masculinity, usually too little. Jones stated that this type of male is often portrayed as an overly sensitive wimp who might also be considered a potential paedophile. Male teachers are understandably fearful of being categorised in this group, yet there is evidence of schools wanting males to deconstruct stereotypes by displaying behaviours such as being caring, talking about feelings, and showing emotions. After she surveyed male primary teachers in New Zealand (*N*=23), White (2011) suggested the need for male role models who can display a range of different masculinities. Ashley and Lee (2003) and Cushman (2008) similarly found evidence of schools wanting males to display behaviours that demonstrated that they had a caring 'feminine' side. Eleven of the principals in Cushman's New Zealand study stated that it was important for male teachers to deconstruct stereotypes by being caring, talking about feelings and showing emotions. The breadth of opinion in these and other studies highlight the assistance that male teachers require in developing strategies to approach this challenge, as many are fearful of being perceived as displaying the wrong kind of masculinity.

The fear and uncertainty that male primary teachers face about their masculinity might be related to the fact that they work in a profession that is numerically dominated by women, as a person's work provides an important support to their identity construction. Smith (2008) stated that work and identity are inseparably connected, with work giving people a sense of belonging. She found that it was highly challenging for men to "construct the identity of being a real man whilst doing women's work" (p. 4). The fact that the prevailing societal view of masculinity that emphasizes strength and dominance does not fit well with traditional primary teaching characteristics such as care and nurturance, have resulted in primary teaching being considered an inappropriate job for a "real" (p. 202) man. Challenging accepted views of masculinity can result in negative reactions from society, with men not displaying "socially acceptable" (Francis & Skelton, 2001, p. 14) masculine behaviours liable to suspicion of homosexuality and paedophilia. These perceptions might be slowly eroding in the face of present requirements for compulsory police checks for all adults working with young children, yet they still remain.

Fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact, role modelling and masculinity are key proximal contextual challenges faced by male primary teachers (Cushman, 2005b). As with the contextual challenges detailed in earlier sections, these challenges were a key focus during the creation of survey questions for this study. Male primary teachers appear to face these numerous challenges and their numbers are continuing to fall as a result; yet some men are still being successfully retained within the profession. The retention of these men might be as a result of how seriously they perceive these challenges, and also the high self-efficacy and positive outcome expectations they possess. The focus of this literature review now turns back to SCCT, and discusses coping with challenges self-efficacy and its potential influence on career persistence.

2.5 Coping Self-efficacy

An individuals' career choices are constantly being reassessed based on the challenges and supports they perceive in their work environment. Lent et al. (1994) initially proposed that proximal, contextual challenges affect career decisions in a direct and negative manner. Yet, in their more recent studies they reported that the relationship between career challenges and goals is indirect, and moderated by various types of self-efficacy such as coping efficacy (Lent et al., 2001; 2005). Various types of self-efficacy have been examined within the SCCT framework, but there is a need for more research focus on coping with challenges self-efficacy, or coping efficacy, primarily because of the confusing effect it can have on the assessment of challenges. Coping efficacy can be considered as an individuals' beliefs regarding their capabilities to negotiate particular environmental challenges (Lent et al., 2000), and is distinctive from task or content-specific self-efficacy. This definition suggests that belief in one's ability to deal with major obstacles is a different aspect of efficacy that might contribute to success and perseverance beyond one's belief in their ability to master particular skills or tasks. The confusion that coping efficacy can cause to challenge assessment is determining what is actually being measured, as the perceiver's perception is always entrenched in their own reality. It is likely that when participants consider items on challenge assessments, they first ask themselves if the challenge is likely to occur and then if they believe they have the coping strategies required to deal with the challenge (Carver et al., 1989). Alternatively, if their coping efficacy is weak, challenges are likely to affect career decisions in the direct and negative manner that SCCT initially proposed.

The level of coping efficacy an individual has might determine whether they attempt and successfully deal with perceived challenges to their career development (Lindley, 2005). This suggests that when facing challenging circumstances, individuals with strong coping efficacy might be more likely to persevere toward their goals, such as persisting within a

profession. This perseverance is highly relevant for this study as the retention of male primary teachers might be related to the numerous gender related challenges they face in their profession (Cushman, 2007). Of additional relevance to this study are the comments of Keverline (2003) who utilised SCCT in a mixed methodology to study women in law enforcement. She concluded that coping efficacy was likely to be the most important aspect of self-efficacy for people working in non-traditional professions.

It appears that the influence proximal contextual factors, such as perceived challenges, have on career choices are dependent on how an individual perceives these factors. It is possible that asking how much a particular challenge will affect one's career might be confusing perceptions of the challenge with the participant's confidence in their ability to cope with it. Therefore the same challenge might be viewed as non-existent, slight, moderate or critical depending on how a person perceives it. As it can be difficult to separate coping efficacy and challenge perceptions (Byars-Winston & Fouad, 2008), more research is required in order to explain influences on challenge perceptions and individuals' efficacy for coping with those challenges. It is important to study the reasons behind these different perceptions in light of Lent et al. (2000) suggestion that the perception of these supports and challenges is the key to predicting career outcomes. Of relevance to this study is the effect that coping efficacy has on how male primary teachers assess and deal with the contextual challenges they face in their profession.

Studies utilising SCCT have shown a negative relationship between coping efficacy and challenges (Byars-Winston, 2006; Lent et al., 2005). The undergraduate participants in these studies have generally reported few perceived challenges and further research is needed to determine if these results are generalisable to other populations. Luzzo and McWhirter (2001) did find that ethnic minorities anticipated more career challenges and reported lower coping efficacy for dealing with them, yet no study has specifically explored the ability of

coping efficacy on the perceptions of men working in gender non-traditional careers. This relationship was a key focus of this study. The semi-structured interviews included questions relating to participants' coping abilities, and this was a key theme during the analysis of this interview data. Designing ways to increase coping efficacy and reduce challenges' ability to negatively influence career choice might increase male primary teachers' ability to be successful in career choices such as persisting within their chosen career.

2.6 Persistence

The choice and performance models of SCCT overlap on the concept of persistence. This overlap is because persistence has components of both choice stability (the decision to endure at a particular course of action) and performance adequacy. Persistence can be considered a sign of performance success because it is assumed that competent performers will persist (and will be allowed to persist) longer in their professions (Lent, 2012), which will result in greater retention. This is highly relevant because of the strong retention focus of this research project. In addition to persistence, the performance model also focuses on the career success that an individual achieves. As mentioned previously, the choice model suggests that career successes influence future career choices such as deciding to persist within a profession. Kyriacou et al. (2003) stated that these early career successes are crucial for teacher retention. Investigating these career successes, such as successfully dealing with challenges, and their influence on persistence, was a key focus of this study.

Despite the fact that two of SCCT's models overlap on the concept of persistence, it remains an understudied aspect of SCCT. The small amount of SCCT persistence research has predominantly focused on how persistence leads to success (Soldner et al., 2012), and the linking of variables via quantitative methodologies (Schaefers, Epperson, & Nauta, 1997). For example Schaefers et al. (1997) surveyed American undergraduate engineering students

(*N*=278) and noted that self-efficacy had the most influence on career persistence. Similar to other research involving SCCT, these studies have primarily involved undergraduates and their persistence within their degrees. More research is needed to investigate working adults and the factors that affect their persistence within their chosen profession.

Additionally, very few studies have used qualitative methods to gain a deeper understanding of the contextual influences that contribute to an individual persisting in their chosen career. One rare example is Lent et al. (2002) who used interviews to examine the career choice challenges, supports, and coping strategies of American university students (*N*=31) from a variety of fields. The authors noted that qualitative methods offer a flexible approach to elaborating on pre-existing theory and exploring events and experiences that individuals view as having been important to their career choices. Despite this complimentary assessment of qualitative methods, they continue to be underutilised in research investigating SCCT. Previous SCCT research has suggested the types of variables that might influence persistence, yet the underutilisation of qualitative methods have resulted in the specific circumstances related to an individual's persistence not being adequately explained. This study used a mixed methodology to do this, specifically in relation to practising Tasmanian male primary teachers. The qualitative aspects of this mixed methodology had priority in this study. These methods are more effective at investigating the unique work environments of these men, and how they contribute to their persistence in the teaching profession.

There has been minimal research utilising SCCT to investigate persistence in teaching (i.e., Mau & Mau, 2006), none of which has focussed on practising teachers. Mau and Mau investigated the factors influencing high school students to persist in aspirations of teaching careers. They found that contextual factors were mediated by self-efficacy beliefs in predicting the likelihood for an individual to persist in aspiring to become a teacher. This relationship is relevant in light of Saifuddin et al. (2013) expectations that intending to persist

is a strong predictor of actual persistence behaviour. Mau and Mau noted that only 33% of male students as compared to 44% of female students persisted in aspiring to teaching careers. This study did not specifically involve primary teaching, yet the findings do not suggest a rise in the percentage of male teachers is likely in the near future. It does however suggest that efficacy is an important factor in relation to persistence. This study therefore explicitly investigated the influence of coping efficacy on the persistence of practising male primary school teachers.

2.7 Conclusion

The majority of research on male primary teachers reviewed in this chapter was conducted utilising qualitative approaches (e.g., Cushman 2005a; Smith, 2008). This valuable research has reported findings containing numerous gender related challenges faced by male primary teachers. This study will extend on this research by using a mixed methods approach to understand how coping efficacy moderated the influence of these challenges, and identify the coping strategies males can use to deal with these challenges. There is some precedent for the use of mixed methods in research on male primary teachers (e.g., Brownhill, 2014; Mistry & Sood, 2013), yet this methodology is far less common. My rationale for choosing to adopt a mixed methods approach is explained within the following methodological discussions. This mixed methods approach involved the gender related challenges discussed in this chapter being used as drivers for the design of a survey instrument described in the next chapter. The results of this survey were then used to inform the development of questions for the interview stage of this study. I will explore and analyse my data through the lens of SCCT, rather than testing a particular part of the theory or a hypothesis. Further to acknowledging the theoretical lens shaping this investigation, I will now discuss the specific details and justification for its design.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter illustrated the gender related challenges faced by male primary teachers identified within the existing body of literature. The purpose of this study was to further investigate these challenges within the Tasmanian male primary teacher context, and identify the coping strategies men use to deal with them, and persist in the profession. More specifically, the research questions that guided this research were:

1. *What gender related challenges do Tasmanian male primary teachers face in their profession?*
2. *How do Tasmanian male primary teachers cope with the gender related challenges they face?*
    a. *Does coping efficacy moderate the influence of the gender related challenges faced by Tasmanian male primary teachers?*

This research was framed within a constructivist paradigm, utilising mixed methodology research techniques. Research question one was answered through an initial quantitative survey, whereas research question two was primarily answered through a qualitative interview phase. As this study utilised a mixed methodology, I will first highlight the theoretical foundations, benefits, and criticisms of this research approach. This exploration is

then followed by a justification of my research design and an extrapolation of my reflexive role within it.

3.2 Theoretical Foundations of Mixed Methods Research

The central premise of mixed methods research (MMR) is that the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches might provide a more comprehensive understanding of particular research problems than either approach could do independently. Using both qualitative and quantitative data can identify different aspects of the same phenomenon so that more complex or substantial pictures of particular research problems may emerge (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie, & Turner, 2007). As I considered the methodological foundations of a mixed methods approach and the implications of this for my research design, I came to better understand the assets and vulnerabilities of MMR.

Qualitative and quantitative methods both have definite strengths in their own right; however they also have well documented weaknesses, particularly in social science research dealing with the complexities of social interactions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Quantitative methods might not always reflexively engage with researchers' personal positions or biases, nor allow for an adequate understanding of individuals' unique contexts or allow their voices to be directly heard (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). These potential weaknesses had implications for my research project as the unique contexts in which male primary teachers work are vital to understanding their perceptions of the gender related challenges they face. Qualitative methods are useful for obtaining this information and can make up for some of the weaknesses of quantitative research, yet Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) noted that qualitative research is seen as deficient because of the personal interpretations made by the researcher.

When quantitative and qualitative methods are combined to answer a research question they can provide complementary strengths that allow for a more complete analysis of the research questions. This approach can be considered a form of "methodological eclecticism" (Yanchar & Williams, 2006, p. 3), which Teddlie and Tashakkori (2011) referred to as an essential characteristic of MMR. Embracing methodological eclecticism can allow researchers to identify what they believe are the best methods for answering their research questions. This flexible 'what works best' approach has strong links to pragmatism and consequently most MMR studies have elements of pragmatism in their design (e.g., Feilzer, 2010; Igo, Kiewra, & Bruning, 2008). Pragmatism is a paradigmatic approach that focuses on the success of the research, and places primary importance on the research question rather than the methods (Cresswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). This study does have pragmatically designed elements, however it has been conducted utilising a constructivist approach. This approach was chosen because male primary teachers' perceptions of the gender related challenges they face in their profession are socially constructed in relation to the particular contexts in which they live and work. Carrying out this research project within a constructivist ontology and epistemology therefore maximised opportunity for comprehensive examination and nuanced exploration of these social constructions.

This study was conducted using a qualitative dominant mixed methods approach. This approach relies on a qualitative, constructivist view of the research process, while also identifying that the addition of quantitative methods and data are likely to benefit most research projects (Johnson et al., 2007). De Lisle (2011) argued that qualitative dominant mixed methods studies are very well suited to capturing the complexity of educational and social issues. The lack of variability in mono method qualitative studies can limit a researcher's ability to fully capture the nuances of the phenomenon they are investigating. The challenges faced by male primary teachers might classify as one of these educational

issues, therefore De Lisle's comments provided justification for the use of a qualitative dominant mixed method approach in this study. The most prominent critiques of MMR (e.g., Howe, 2004) and how the methodological design of this study was developed in consideration of the identified criticisms will now be discussed.

3.3 Criticisms of Mixed Methods Research

Despite the opportunities a mixed methods approach provides, mixed methods have not been without their critics. Some ardent qualitative researchers suggest that MMR brings out the worst of the quantitative and qualitative methods, and does not really stay true to either one. The most common criticism of MMR is based on the incompatibility thesis (e.g., Howe, 2004). Proponents of this purist perspective argued that different paradigms could not be mixed in a single study due to their different definitions of concepts such as quantitative versus qualitative, and reliability and validity. To do so would likely result in critical aspects of one method's findings being ignored, misinterpreted or reinterpreted by the researcher's preferred worldview. Guba and Lincoln (2005) began to cautiously take down the artificial boundaries created by proponents of the purist perspective through delinking paradigms and methods. This development meant that conducting research within a specific paradigm did not mean a researcher was bound to the specific data collection and analysis methods commonly associated with that paradigm. The key inference for this study was that Guba and Lincoln were giving provisional support for surveys to be used in research informed by constructivist epistemologies. This study involved the mixing of methods within the single paradigm of constructivism. In this way, this research can be seen as dialectical in terms of methods, not epistemology or ontology.

Scholars such as Denzin and Lincoln (2005) have also expressed concern that MMR prioritises quantitative methods over qualitative. Bryman (2007) further stated that MMR

often dismisses qualitative findings if they conflict with quantitative findings. When MMR emerged in the late 1970s, numerous studies involved researchers adding a qualitative component to an initially quantitative study (Howe, 2004). This was primarily done to make more sense out of numerical findings and has contributed to a lot of MMR research emphasising the quantitative component. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2011) specifically responded to this criticism when they expressed their deep regard for the "powerful contributions" (p. 286) of qualitative methods and stated that studies emphasising these methods were "among the most valuable of all the extant MMR literature" (p. 286). In recent years MMR investigations that emphasised qualitative elements have become more common and more valued. The choice and design of the methodological framework for this study reflects these developments in its use of a qualitative dominant mixed methods design. The qualitative interviews were given priority over the initial quantitative survey, which allowed for a more in depth examination of the complex issue of gender related challenges faced by male primary teachers. Further details of what this looks like in practice will be discussed in the subsequent research design section.

Another of the major criticisms of MMR is that the quantitative and qualitative data do not adequately inform and interact with each other (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010), and are often treated as completely separate. In this study I have deliberately sought to ensure interaction of my different data types by using an explanatory sequential mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This mixed methods approach will be outlined in the research design section below. This approach may be more time consuming, but it enabled me to construct an explicitly sequential and interactive methodological approach, which in turn enabled a straightforward and scaffolded means to answering my research questions.

3.4 Research Design

This mixed methods study utilised a sequential explanatory mixed methods design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011) that consisted of an initial quantitative survey phase with specific findings then being explored in more depth in a subsequent qualitative phase. The qualitative phase was given priority (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003) because this study was focussed on an in depth examination of challenges, and identification of coping strategies. The initial quantitative phase was conducted in order to obtain broader perspectives to inform the development of the interview questions for phase two. This strategic approach was undertaken in an attempt to produce findings that were as authentic and trustworthy as possible.

The quantitative and qualitative phases were connected (Hanson, Creswell, Plano Clark, Petska, & Creswell, 2005) when selecting the participants for the qualitative phase of the study, and also when using survey results to construct the interview questions around the challenges of most concern to participants. The results of both phases were integrated (Creswell et al., 2003) when discussing the survey results with interview participants, and during the discussion and analysis of the findings of the study as a whole. This section presents these two phases in chronological order. A visual representation of the research design is presented in Figure 3.1 below. This chronological approach was adapted from an explanatory sequential mixed methods study conducted by Ivankova and Stick (2007).

Phase 1	Procedure	Product
Quantitative Survey Construction	Construct and conduct pilot survey	Pilot survey
	Test for pilot survey validity and reliability	
	Construct survey within Qualtrics	Survey
	↓	
Ethical Considerations	Obtain ethics approval	Ethics approval
	↓	
Quantitative Data Collection	Web-based survey (N=53)	Numeric data
	↓	
Quantitative Data Analysis	Rasch modelling to determine reliability and validity	Numeric data
	Descriptive statistics	
	↓	
Phase 2	**Procedure**	**Product**
Interview Protocol Development	Purposefully selection of interview participants (*n*=5)	Interview participants (*n*=5)
	Development of interview questions	Interview protocol
	↓	
Qualitative Data Collection	2 x 60 minute one on one semi structured interviews with each participant	Text data (interviews with transcripts)
	↓	
Qualitative Data Analysis	Code data in Nvivo	Codes
	Inductive and deductive thematic analysis	Themes
	↓	
Integration of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings	Interpretation and explanation of the quantitative and qualitative results	Discussion
		Implications for future research

Figure 3.1. Visual representation of the research design.

3.4.1 Phase One - Quantitative

Phase one of this study consisted of the construction and validation of the quantitative survey instrument, and the subsequent collection and analysis of data from this survey. This phase was not the priority of this study, yet it was important to fully explain the complex analyses performed, as they are integrally linked to the trustworthiness and authenticity of the overall findings of this study. Ethical considerations have also been included in this phase in order to accurately present this study in chronological order.

Quantitative Survey Construction

There were no valid and reliable survey instruments within this area of inquiry that I could use to answer my research questions. Therefore, I constructed a survey based on the

challenges faced by male primary teachers represented in the literature. I conducted a pilot study on a cohort of pre-service male primary teachers (*N*=32) (Cruickshank, Pedersen, Hill, & Callingham, 2015) (See Appendix A) and used Rasch analysis to confirm the strong content and construct validity, and reliability (α = 0.90) of this original tool. Following the publishing of this pilot survey, a second survey utilising literature surrounding practising male primary teachers was constructed (See Appendix B) using the same multi-tiered analysis as Cruickshank et al. (2015). The stages of this analysis undertaken during survey construction were item formulation and content validity.

Item Formulation

A literature review was conducted on the gender related challenges male primary school teachers face in their profession. This review was primarily done using the ERIC database and Google Scholar. Specific eJournals such as Gender and Education were also accessed if full text versions of articles were not available through ERIC. Relevant research has identified many gender related challenges faced by male primary teachers, but only challenges that were identified in multiple studies were included in the survey. All challenges were presented as four point Likert-scale survey items with the following descriptors '1 = Not a challenge', '2 = Slight challenge', '3 = Moderate challenge', and '4 = Critical challenge'. These descriptors were based on previous education based surveys (Anderson & Pickeral, 2000; Cushman, 2000). All items were constructed in a positive direction. Participants were required to rate the Likert-scale items from their perspective as a male primary teacher. Each challenge item was followed by additional questions regarding the coping strategies participants used to deal with the challenge. If required, participants were also able to add additional challenges and coping strategies at the end of the survey.

Content validation

Once the survey had been constructed from relevant literature, the next step was to assess the survey's content validity. For this study, content validity was achieved through the survey items sufficiently representing the gender related challenges faced by male primary teachers, as deemed by an expert panel (*N*=6) selected by the author to review the content and readability of the electronic delivery of the survey. The editing of items and information by expert panels is common during the content validation phase of survey construction (Oh, Seo, & Kozub, 2010). The expert panel included a male primary teacher, a male primary principal, a female English teacher, and three researchers within an Australian university Faculty of Education. The panel were informed of the purpose of the survey and the construct the survey intended to measure was that of perceived gender related challenges, specifically for male primary teachers. They were then asked to provide feedback and propose suggestions for improvement.

The expert panel proposed a variety of changes, including a reordering of the information contained in the introduction to increase clarity, and the addition of a back button so participants could return to previous questions. The wording of certain items was also changed in order to make them more specific and easier to understand. An example of this was item 13 being shortened from 'uncertainty about what the potential expectations of male teachers being role models involves' to 'uncertainty about expectations of male teachers as role models'. Other items were either deleted or combined, and the total number of challenge related items was reduced from eleven to nine. These survey items are presented in alphabetical order in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2

The Gender Related Challenges Faced by Male Primary Teachers

Gender Related Challenges Faced by Male Primary Teachers	Examples of Previous Literature
Being discouraged by dissatisfaction with teacher salaries	Cushman, 2007; Smith 2008
Dealing with workload issues due to expectations to fulfil 'additional roles' such as coaching sports teams, handling discipline issues, assisting with physical jobs, and attending camps and excursions	Mills, Martino, & Lingard, 2004; Sargent, 2000
Discouragement from perceptions of male primary teachers in society/media	Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Carrington, 2002
Discouragement from your family about being a primary school teacher	Cushman 2005a; Foster & Newman, 2005
Discouragement from your friends about being a primary school teacher	Cushman 2005a; Mulholland & Hansen, 2003
Feeling isolated in typically female dominated schools	Ashcraft & Sevier, 2006; Cushman, 2005b
The potential for your sexuality to be questioned	Jones, 2007; Mills, Haase, & Charlton, 2008
Uncertainty about expectations of male teachers as role models	Ashley, 2003; White, 2011
Uncertainty surrounding making physical contact with students	Cooney & Bittner, 2001; Szwed, 2010

The panel concluded that the survey had sufficient content validity because it adequately measured the intended construct of perceived gender related challenges for male primary teachers. As there was no other existing instrument that has attempted to measure these challenges to use for cross validation, the literature review and the expert panel were relied on to ensure sufficient content validation. Following this process, the survey was digitally created within the online Qualtrics survey development tool.

Ethical Considerations

Once the survey for practising male primary teachers was completed ethical approval was sought from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Tasmania (HREC) before the data collection phase. The HREC requested one major change to the survey. Initially the survey contained an item asking participants to write their email address if they wished to self-nominate to the interview phase. However, this item had to be changed in order to satisfy the ethics committee concern that participants' responses would not be adequately protected through anonymity. This request resulted in this item being changed to a yes or no response. Participants who answered yes were taken to a second survey (Appendix C) where they could give their contact details. This change satisfied the ethics committee's concerns as participants' contact details to participate in the interview phase were completely separate from their survey responses.

After receiving ethics approval (see Appendix D), the Tasmanian Department of Education (DoE), Catholic Education Office (CEO) and Independent Schools Tasmania (IST) were contacted for permission to approach the schools represented by their organisations. Both the CEO and IST gave their approval on the condition that initial contact was made through the school Principal. The DoE refused to give

approval due to the study not aligning with their literacy and numeracy specific research interests.

All principals in CEO and IST schools (*N*=68) were contacted via phone and or email and invited to offer their male teachers the opportunity to participate in the study (Appendix E). There were 175 male primary teachers working in CEO and IST schools who were potential participants for this study (ABS, 2016). If principals were willing for their school to be involved in the study, they were forwarded an email to distribute to all male primary teachers currently working in their school. This email included an information sheet (Appendix F) and a link to the online survey (Appendix B), which contained the consent form. These documents contained information on the purpose of the study, why they have been invited to participate and what their participation would involve. They were further informed that there were no specific risks from participation in this study, that all data would be kept on password secured computers at the University of Tasmania, and that they would be free to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were required to provide consent before accessing the challenge related survey items and all survey responses were anonymous.

Quantitative Data Collection

Once participants accessed the survey and indicated their consent they were able to respond to questions about the gender related challenges they faced as male primary teachers, and the strategies they used to cope with these challenges. The survey also included demographic questions about participants age, years of experience, number of male teaching colleagues, gender of their principal, if they were a father, and whether or not teaching was their first career. All surveys were completed within the Qualtrics website during a two week period in August 2013.

Survey participants took an average of 29.90 minutes to complete the survey, with a standard deviation of 20.34 minutes.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The data analysis completed during phase one consisted of determining the validity and reliability of the instrument, and reporting the descriptive statistics for the survey items. Participants' responses to open ended strategy related questions were collated using Microsoft Word so they could be analysed along with the interview data during phase two. Construct validity and reliability were analysed first as the relevance of the survey results were contingent on these results.

Construct Validity

Construct validity is an important consideration as it provides researchers with confidence that their survey accurately measures the construct it was created to measure. In this study, construct validity was determined through Rasch modelling (Rasch, 1960). This approach aligns with the process Cavanagh and Sparrow (2010) used to validate a scale of mathematics anxiety, and is an important component of survey development in light of researchers such as Wang and Berlin (2010) criticising survey developers for failing to fully address validity when designing their instruments.

Within Rasch modelling, construct validity is determined by considering the fit to the model of both the survey items and the participants (Wright & Masters, 1982). The underpinning assumption of the Rasch model is that the items measure a single, unidimensional construct; in this case gender related challenges for male primary teachers. The test that determines whether the scale measures such a construct is 'fit to the model' (Bond & Fox, 2007). When all items fit the model, they are considered to measure a single, unidimensional construct. The most commonly

quoted measure of fit to the model is the information weighted mean square residual or infit statistic. Both the infit statistic and outfit statistic indicate how accurately and predictably data fit the model, however the infit statistic is preferred because it is less sensitive to outliers than the unweighted outfit measure.

Rasch model analysis provides a researcher with several outputs for interpretating the construct validity of a survey instrument. The infit statistic has an ideal mean square (MNSQ) value of 1.00, and a standardised z (ZSTD) value of ±2. MNSQ values show the amount of distortion in the measurement system. Values less than 1.00 indicate overfit meaning the data is too predictable, whereas values greater than 1.00 indicate under fit or under predictability. ZSTD values show whether or not the data did actually fit the model. If ZSTD values fall within the required ±2 range this is confirmation that a single construct is being measured, and provides evidence of construct validity. The degree to which the participants also fit the model provides further evidence that the test behaved as intended. Consistent misfit, of either items or participants, is a threat to construct validity.

The second aspect of construct validity is that the survey items actually measure what they intend to measure. This relies on a qualitative assessment of the construct output provided by the Rasch model analysis. Rasch measurement provides a means of applying a criterion-referenced approach to this interpretation (Griffin, 2007). Items are distributed along the scale in order of difficulty, and the groupings of items at different points indicate similar expectations of endorsement. In this way a profile can be developed of, in this study, increasing perceptions of gender related challenges. Rasch analysis is commonly used to measure construct validity because of the quality of this approach (Bond, 2003; Fisher, 1994). In this study, the Partial Credit Model (Masters, 1982) was used, because although every item had the same

scale structure (1-4 on a Likert scale), respondents might not necessarily use every nominal category for every item. The partial credit model takes into account the resultant inconsistencies caused by this type of response. The analysis was undertaken using *Winsteps 3.75.0* (Linacre, 2012) software.

Reliability

Data from participants' responses to the survey items were analysed for internal consistency within the Winsteps software. Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient (Cronbach, 1951) is a specific measure of the degree to which items within the survey measure the same construct as other items in the survey. This is the most common measure of survey reliability in social science literature and was utilised in this study because it provides a good estimate of reliability in most situations (Nunnally, 1978). An alpha value of 0.70 is considered to be the benchmark for demonstrating internal consistency of newly established scales.

Survey Data Analysis

Participants' raw data from the demographic questions and the survey responses were initially tabulated within Excel to calculate means, standard deviations, and frequency counts for each of the challenge items. The frequency counts are presented as both raw numbers and percentages. This presentation of descriptive survey statistics was consistent with the approach undertaken in my previous pilot study (Cruickshank et al., 2015). As the research questions did not warrant the use of interferential statistics for determining significant differences, the proposed data analysis was solely used to inform the construction of questions for the interview phase of this study.

3.4.2 Phase Two - Qualitative

Phase two of this study consisted of the development of interview questions, the collection and analysis of qualitative interview data, and the integration of qualitative findings from open ended survey questions and interviews. As the male primary teacher research outlined in chapter two predominantly used interviews or focus groups, I will firstly justify the choice of semi structured interviews for the qualitative phase of this study. Semi-structured interviews were used in this study because they allowed for an accurate representation of the opinions of all participants in this study. The flexibility of this more conversational and informal approach to data collection allowed me to encourage further elaboration upon the participants' statements and ask clarifying questions where necessary (Akerlind, 2008). This prompting or probing was important for ensuring a comprehensive understanding of participants' views and any examples they used to illustrate their opinions. It also allowed for participants to share valuable insights and experiences that were relevant to the research that I had not yet considered.

To best represent participants' individual voices, I sought to avoid situations such as 'social loafing' and 'groupthink' that can occur during focus groups (Thackeray & Neiger, 2004). Social loafing describes participants who contribute very little and consequently leave the researcher unsure if they agree with what is being said and have nothing to add, or if they disagree but do not want to say so. This situation ties closely to the concept of groupthink, which transpires when group members wish to maintain a unified voice. Participants censoring opinions that diverge from the group view is a limitation of the focus group approach (Thackeray & Neiger, 2004), and was a scenario I wanted to avoid.

I was concerned that both social loafing and groupthink could occur due to the sensitivity of some of the challenges, such as uncertainty surrounding physical contact. Individual interviews were most appropriate, as they enabled me to encourage participants to discuss their feelings and opinions openly when exploring these sensitive topics (Harrell & Bradley, 2009; Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). Harrell and Bradley also believe that interviews are superior to focus groups when the researcher is interested in determining the relative emphasis of an issue. As I was interested in establishing which challenges were of most concern to participants, I determined that interviews would allow me to do this most effectively, as they provided the opportunity to directly ask individual participants how strongly they felt about particular challenges. I was concerned that the dynamics of focus group interaction could lead to an emphasis that was misleading, as some members may not feel the same way about some challenges, but would conform to the consensus of the group.

One-on-one interviews were a time consuming method to conduct the research, but the benefits of using such a research technique outweighed the time constraints. Time constraints or vested effort are not justifiable reasons to dismiss what is otherwise the best means of serving the investigation outcomes. Data collected in this manner meant that participants could articulate their own experiences and understandings of the questions posed. This approach best served the aims of the research project and provided the greatest opportunity to accurately address the research questions.

Interview Protocol Development

All interview participants were interviewed twice for approximately 60 minutes. The guiding questions (Appendix G) for these interviews were designed to

allow participants the opportunity to describe the gender related challenges they faced in their profession, as well as elaborating on and explaining the quantitative survey data. To do this I started the first interviews with an open-ended "grand tour question" (Harrell & Bradley, 2009, p. 43) for example "Can you tell me about your experiences of being a male primary teacher?" This approach encouraged an open environment for participants to talk about their unique experiences of being male primary teachers, specifically their perceptions and experiences of gender related challenges. Short prompt questions were asked to gain further information or specific examples of what they were talking about. The majority of the first interview was directed by the information volunteered by the participant. I was careful to allow the participant adequate time and opportunity to talk about the gender related challenges that were most relevant to them, and the coping strategies they use to overcome these challenges. The direction of this first interview was primarily led by the experiences and views shared by the participant.

The quantitative data collected and analysed during phase one was primarily used to construct the prompt questions around the major challenges identified by survey participants. Towards the end of the first interview, I shared the aggregate results of the quantitative survey and when required, asked questions relating to specific items. These situations were rare as all participants voluntarily talked about the major challenges identified during the survey phase.

The second interview allowed for participants to provide greater depth of detail in regards to the critical events that they had experienced, as well as elaborate upon other points of interest from their first interview. The guiding questions for the second interview were primarily concerned with the strategies participants used to cope with the gender related challenges they faced, and their coping efficacy. Prompt

questions about strategies for the major challenges identified in the survey phase were asked if required.

Qualitative Data Collection

Interview participants were chosen from amongst the participants who self-nominated at the end of the phase one survey, and contacted by email. These participants were chosen in order to cover a variety of ages, schools, years of experience and geographical locations. This approach was used in order to gain a wide range of unique insights that could assist me to best answer the research questions. All participants who were contacted agreed to partake in the study and were interviewed twice at mutually agreeable times and locations. These interviews usually occurred in participants' classrooms at the end of the school day so that the time requirements for participants were not unnecessarily increased by travel time. This data collection approach reiterates and reflects a constructivist epistemology. These interviews were conducted approximately four months apart, respecting recommendations (Webster & Mertova, 2007) to allow sufficient time for data to 'rest', creating the sense of critical distance that is imperative for objective analysis.

Pseudonyms were provided to interview participants so that they were anonymous within all data they shared. As participants invariably referred to specific influential people and places that had affected their experiences of being a male primary teacher, these names were also changed to protect their identity. The assurance of anonymity was designed to encourage participants to speak freely and openly.

All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. I transcribed all interviews myself and checked the written transcripts against the audio files to ensure their accuracy. At this point I attempted to identify the key experiences that had

influenced participants' perceptions of the gender related challenges they faced. I occasionally added some questions about these experiences via track changes before sending the transcripts back to participants to check for accuracy and add additional explanatory information if required. All participants added clarification and additional material to these questions using track changes before sending the document back.

Conducting repeated interviews with the same participants, prolonged engagement, and member checking are important strategies for minimising researcher bias (Berger, 2015). These strategies were undertaken to try and ensure that the collection and representation of data was done in a way that authentically represented the voices of my participants. The data generated throughout these repeated interviews and associated member checking provided a rich breadth and depth of data to scrutinise and draw insights that enabled me to explicate the research questions guiding this investigation.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative data were initially coded line by line into key themes in both an inductive and deductive manner. The deductive analysis centred on the gender related challenges faced by male primary teachers that were identified in relevant literature, and had been used to construct the survey questions. I primarily focused on the three major challenges identified in the Rasch and survey data analyses; fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact, increased workload, and social isolation. The inductive analysis allowed for new themes and connections to emerge from the interview data. These connections primarily dealt with coping strategies and coping efficacy. As I went through the analysis and interpretation of interview data I recognised the need to explore the policy frameworks guiding the actions of the

participants in this study. The resultant policy review added a valuable additional data source to this study. The 14 reviewed policies are listed in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3.3

Reviewed Physical Contact Policies

Policy	Organisation	State
Code of Conduct	Edmund Rice Education Australia	All
Principles, Protocols and Standards of Practice	Australian Jesuit Province	All
Code of Professional Practice	Department of Education and Training	Australian Capital Territory
Professional Responsibilities	Department of Education	New South Wales
Code of Conduct	Catholic Education Wollongong	New South Wales
Protective Practices	Teachers Registration Board	Northern Territory
Code of Conduct	Catholic Education Brisbane	Queensland
Code of Conduct	Catholic Education South Australia	South Australia
Protective Practices	Department of Education and Child Services	South Australia
Code of Conduct	Catholic Education Commission	Tasmania
Code of Conduct	Christian Schools Tasmania	Tasmania
Conduct and Behaviour Standards	Department of Education	Tasmania
Code of Conduct	Victorian Institute of Teaching	Victoria
Code of Conduct	Department of Education	Western Australia

Within the three key challenge related themes, data were then coded axially in order to relate key concepts and categories to each other. Codes were then consolidated into themes for discussion. All coding and analysis was done using the NVivo software package (Version 10). The coding of interview data was influenced by the findings from phase one as I was looking for data surrounding the major challenges identified in the surveys. I was conscious of coding as openly as possible,

but the fact that I wanted to identify strategies for the major challenges is likely to have influenced the coding of these data. It is possible that this process of analysing interview data within the framework of MMR could have resulted in other minor themes being overlooked.

3.5 Reflexivity

Research data does not necessarily speak for itself; it has to be interpreted. This act of interpretation will be influenced by the various personal lenses researchers bring to their research. These lenses can include their cultural, social and political backgrounds, gender, as well as personal values and biases (Cohen et al., 2011). Researchers need to show an awareness of their impact on the research process by positioning themselves within their writing in order to secure the authenticity and trustworthiness of their work. This is the concept of reflexivity in which the researcher is conscious of their influence on the data collected, the way they are collected, and the ways they are analysed and interpreted (Walter, 2010). This awareness is accompanied by the researcher embarking on a process of continual internal dialogue and critical self-evaluation in relation to their positionality.

Reflexivity is associated with qualitative research methods. It is commonly used in relation to qualitative data collection methods such as interviews, where interactions between the researcher and participant can influence data (Allen, 2011). The use of reflexivity within quantitative research methods is less common because data is often collected and analysed by inanimate instruments and computer programs. Quantitative researchers minimise the risk of bias by trying to be external, objective observers. Reflexivity is therefore seen as unnecessary as it does not add anything to the collection of factual quantitative data (Walker, Read, & Priest, 2013). These

contrasting approaches raise questions about the place of reflexivity within a mixed methods study. Despite the philosophical dichotomy between qualitative and quantitative research, researchers such as Walker et al. and Mason (2006) have suggested that mixed methods researchers should adopt a consistent approach to reflexivity across their research projects.

A reflexive approach was used in this qualitative dominant mixed methods study because it was consistent with a constructivist methodology. A constructivist axiology demands that researchers are explicit about how their personal values have shaped their research. This notion is important because constructivism views all data as being contingent on the researcher's interpretation. In acknowledging that it is not possible to have an entirely value-free and objective social science, I took a reflexive approach to the design and implementation of the research that follows Stanley and Wise's (1983) view that the researcher is "always the medium through which research occurs" (p.157). All research is value-laden, but research is not adversely affected by this acknowledgment. Rather, the research is enriched by the recognition of the influence of the researcher and their values in the designing and carrying out of the project. With this notion in mind, I followed the advice of Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) who stated that good research is characterised by the researcher explicitly stating their position.

Reflecting on my position, I came to this research project having worked in several different Tasmanian primary schools as a health and physical education specialist. The number of other male teachers at these schools had affected my experiences and job satisfaction, and my interest in whether or not this was the case for Tasmanian male classroom teachers motivated my research in this area. It would be wrong for me to claim an objectivity that extends beyond these past experiences,

and my consequent beliefs about male teachers in primary schools. These experiences have undoubtedly affected how I conducted this research and it was important to recognise and acknowledge where and how this occurred. Through extensive reflection, one key personal belief emerged in relation to this project, which was a preference for more males teaching in primary school classrooms.

I do not believe that more male teachers are required in primary schools because they are better than female teachers. Indeed there is likely to be as much variety within genders as there is between genders. Rather, I believe more men are required so that primary school staffrooms better reflect the communities in which they operate. This ideal also extends to other minority groups that are underrepresented within primary school staffrooms. These groups would include teachers of minority races, ethnicities, and sexual preferences. I believe a school staffroom that is reflective of the community in which it operates sends the message that education is for everyone. If students have teacher role models that they can relate to, they could be more likely to consider their educational futures more positively. I acknowledged this belief, yet I was aware that this acknowledgement did not automatically mean I would stop being selective or biased.

Critical reflection was used as a means to "self-check" and ensure that participants' perceptions and experiences were represented in authentic and trustworthy ways (Muncey, 2010). I was particularly mindful of situations where I had the potential to steer data, such as during the semi-structured interviews. I was conscious of asking open-ended questions and letting participants detail the experiences they wanted to discuss. In all cases, the participants introduced the major challenges I wanted to discuss and the conversation evolved from their statements. I

also did not intentionally steer participants towards or away from sharing awkward or uncomfortable events. In allowing participants some control in the direction of the interview, I was attempting to minimise my influence, and correct for some of the power asymmetry (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) that exists between the interviewer and interviewee.

The fact that I had experience of being a male teacher working in a Tasmanian primary school meant that I might have been able to gain trust and achieve rapport with participants more quickly because I was able to relate to the challenges they shared, and understand the terminology they used. My relationship to the research topic had the potential to enable me to better understand participants' perceptions, and interpretation of their lived experiences in a way that would be impossible without this knowledge (Mruck & Mey, 2007). I did not volunteer personal information about my teaching experiences, but answered any questions that participants asked. I was mindful of the importance of creating an open and honest environment as participants were being asked questions about potentially sensitive issues. I was also aware than my position might be fluid rather than static, as reflexivity is a two way process (Berger, 2015). Just as my beliefs and values had the potential to influence the research procedures and participants, these procedures and people could have influenced my own thinking. Therefore, I had to continually assess my position in relation to my study, and the potential influence of this position on my research. I was particularly mindful of my position during the analysis of qualitative data. As I had personally experienced gender related challenges such as isolation I was conscious of presenting participant data accurately, rather than simply as confirmation of my own experiences. The analysis of quantitative and qualitative data is presented in the following discussion chapters.

Chapter 4

Overview of Findings and Discussion Chapters

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I report the validity, reliability, and descriptive statistics of the questionnaire used to survey the participants regarding their perceptions of the gender related challenges they faced in their profession. Survey participant information is provided before I present a chronological analysis based on the reliability and validity procedures described in Cruickshank et al. (2015). This presentation of data is not in order of importance, rather it represents the timeline for the study. As item formulation and content validity were covered in the method chapter earlier, the results below focus on the other methodological procedures encompassed within a Rasch (1960) analysis: reliability and construct validation. These analyses of the whole scale ensured that inferences drawn from the data were robust and sound. Descriptive statistics about participant responses to the items are then detailed. The

descriptive statistics gained from this survey provided a basis for further exploration and were used to assist me in designing questions for the semi-structured interviews, which were the primary focus of my investigation.

4.2 Survey Participants

Of the 175 male primary teachers working in non-government schools in Tasmania (ABS, 2016), 57 accessed the survey, of which 53 completed it. This number represents 30% of the possible survey participants. Demographic data revealed that most participants in this were over 30 years of age, had over six years of experience, had male teaching colleagues in their schools, were fathers, and had entered teaching as their first career. Just over half of participants had a female principal. Demographic details can be seen in Figure 4.1 below.

Age	n/53	Experience	n/53	No. of Men	n/53	Principal	n/53	Children	n/53	First Career	n/53
21-30	13	**0-5 years**	12	**1**	7	**Male**	26	**Yes**	34	**Yes**	32
31+	40	**6+ years**	41	**2+**	46	**Female**	27	**No**	19	**No**	21

Figure 4.1. Survey participant demographic details.

4.3 Reliability

Reliability for the nine item instrument used in this study was high (α=0.82) indicating that the survey items had a strong level of internal consistency. Although there are no directly related surveys to compare this value to, the obtained correlation coefficient is above the 0.70 criterion value (Nunally, 1978), typically utilised with other education-based surveys (e.g., Bai, Hudson, Millwater, & Tones, 2012; Firdaus, 2006).

4.4 Construct Validation

Assessing construct validation through Rasch analysis provided a number of interpretative data outcomes, including infit and outfit values to demonstrate fit to the model, bubble maps to depict item accuracy, and variable maps to demonstrate item difficulty. Mean infit and outfit scores measure the alignment, or fit, of the survey results to the Rasch modelled expectations. Mean square values (MNSQ) between 0.6 and 1.4 are generally deemed to be acceptable for Likert-scale survey items (Bond & Fox, 2007), with standardised values (ZSTD) between ±2. The scores for items and persons all fell within these required ranges (see Table 4.2). Participant statistics were also included because the degree to which they also fit the model provides further evidence that the survey behaved as intended (Wright & Masters, 1982). Participants provided a variety of answers to the different survey items; nonetheless mean person fit was acceptable. This indicated that participants responded to the items in consistent and expected ways.

Table 4.2

Mean Infit and Outfit Scores for Items and Persons

		INFIT		OUTFIT	
	MEAN (logits)	MNSQ	ZSTD	MNSQ	ZSTD
ITEMS	0	1.11	0	1.14	0.1
PERSONS	-1.7	0.97	-0.1	1.11	0.1

Item infit was further illustrated in the Rasch bubble chart (Figure 4.3) and Item infit and outfit scores table (Table 4.4). The bubble chart shows most items falling within the required ZSTD range of ±2 (Bond & Fox, 2007). Within this chart, each numbered bubble represents an item in the survey. The size of each bubble is reflective of the precision of the item in measuring the construct of gender related challenges for male primary teachers. Smaller bubbles such as those for the contact, workload and isolation items indicate more precise measures. As the larger size of some bubbles is reflective of the small number of participants in this study; further use of this instrument with increased participant numbers might improve the precision of item measurement.

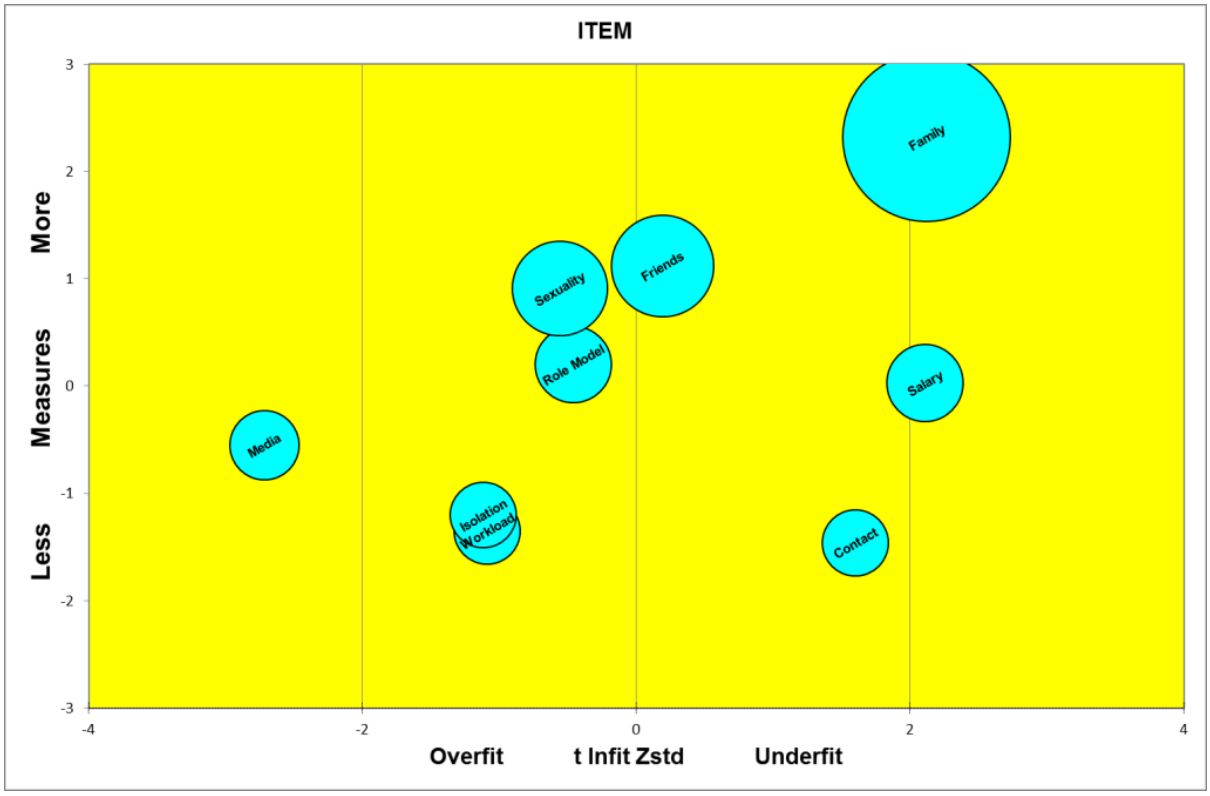


Figure 4.3. Bubble map of item infit.

Table 4.4

Item Infit and Outfit Scores

ITEM	MEASURE	MODLSE	IN.MSQ	IN.ZSTD	OUT.MSQ	OUT.ZSTD
Contact	-1.45	0.18	1.31	1.6	1.26	1.4
Workload	-1.31	0.18	0.8	-1.1	0.77	-1.2
Isolation	-1.24	0.18	0.8	-1.2	0.76	-1.3
Media	-0.56	0.19	0.57	-2.7	0.54	-2.5
Salary	0.02	0.21	1.47	2.1	1.63	2.1
Role Model	0.2	0.21	0.89	-0.5	0.84	-0.5
Sexuality	0.9	0.26	0.84	-0.6	1.53	1.3
Friends	1.12	0.28	1.03	0.2	1.01	0.2
Family	2.31	0.46	2.24	2.1	1.92	1.2

The salary, family and media items were just outside the accepted ±2 ZSTD range. The precision variance of the salary and family items are within range, but they indicated a slight under fit to the model. This under fit was probably caused by a small number of participants who chose an unexpected answer for these items. The media item was the only challenge that was out of the required range. This item indicated an overfit showing that it was marginally too easy for the model to predict. The majority of participants chose similar answers for this item, which is likely to have caused this overfit. Conforming too precisely to the Rasch model is not a threat to construct validity, as this item is still measuring the same construct as other items, it is just measuring it more rigorously.

Rasch analysis allows for the recalculation of reliability based on the removal of items. A Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficient was recalculated excluding each of these three items in turn; without the salary item (α=0.83), without the family item (α=0.83), and without the media (α=0.77). None of these omissions strengthened our original alpha coefficient (α=0.82) enough to warrant the removal of any of these items from the survey.

Figure 4.3 (bubble map) also shows the relative difficulty of the items in logits, which is the unit of Rasch measurement. Logit values are distributed about a mean of 0 logits. The data presented in Figure 4.3 appears to be upside down because it uses a scale of difficulty, and the term 'challenge' is generally perceived as a negative emotion. Therefore, the major gender related challenges (physical contact, workload and isolation) appear towards the bottom of the scale (negative value) because it was easier for participants to agree that they were actual challenges. The family and friends items are located at the top of the scale because participants found it more difficult to agree that these items were actual challenges. This rating was likely caused by the fact that participants perceived these items as less difficult and easier to cope with.

Based on this quantitative analysis, this study specifically focused on the major gender related challenges of physical contact, workload and isolation. These challenges are represented by smaller bubbles, indicating that they are the more precise items. Further evidence for focussing on these three challenges can be found in another useful output derived from Rasch analysis; a variable map (Figure 4.5). Figure 4.5 demonstrates the relationship between participants, items and the construct of gender related challenges, and their alignment on a single measurement scale. This

variable map provides a clearer representation of item difficulty and similar to the logit chart in figure 4.3, items at the top of the scale are those which respondents found difficult to rate as challenges, whereas those at the lower end of the scale were the easiest for participants to rate as challenges.

Figure 4.5 shows that there were distinct ‘steps’ between items or groups of items. The items involving fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact, increased workload, and social isolation are grouped together at the bottom of the scale. This indicates that participants found it easiest to agree that these items were real challenges for them. As these challenges were the most difficult for participants to deal with they became a key focus of the interview stage of this study.

Logits	Persons		Items
3		+	
		I	
		I	
		I	
		I	Family
		I	
2		+	
		I	
		I	
		I	
		I	
		I	Friends
1		+	
		I	Sexuality
	X	I	
	X	I	
		I	
		I	Role Model
0		+	Salary
	XX	I	
	XXXX	I	
		I	Media
	XXXXX	I	
	XXXXX	I	
-1	XXXX	+	
	X	I	Isolation
		I	Workload
	XXXXX	I	Contact
	XX	I	
		I	
-2	XXXXXXXXX	+	
		I	
	XXX	I	
		I	
	XXX	I	
		I	
-3	XXX	+	
	X	I	
	X	I	
		I	
		I	
	XXX	I	
-4	XX	+	

Figure 4.5. Variable map showing participants and items.

The analysis described above indicated that this survey instrument had high internal reliability and construct validity. Through each of the Rasch analysis procedures it was evident that the three challenges of physical contact, increased workload, and social isolation were the most important items measured in the survey. Thus, these challenges were the key focus for the semi-structured interview stage to follow. Before potential prompt questions for these interviews are developed, a descriptive analysis of all items will be presented. All items were examined though

the demographic variables included in the survey. This analysis enabled a more layered approach to designing the questions regarding these three prominent gender related challenges.

4.5 Quantitative Survey Data

Descriptive survey data were initially tabulated using Microsoft Excel to calculate means, standard deviations and frequency counts for each of the challenge items (see Table 4.6). This presentation of descriptive survey statistics aligns with my previous pilot study (Cruickshank et al., 2015). The frequency counts are presented as both raw numbers and percentages. These data supported the Rasch analysis finding that the challenges concerning physical contact ($\bar{X}$=2.43+/-1.03), workload ($\bar{X}$=2.36±1.00) and isolation ($\bar{X}$=2.32±1.03) were the most difficult for participants to deal with. No other challenge had a mean score above two which indicated that these challenges were not as difficult for most participants. Additionally, the four point Likert scale was made dichotomous by dividing responses into those that perceived an item was not a challenge (1) and those that that perceived an item was a challenge, either slight, moderate or critical (2, 3, 4). This division revealed that more than two thirds of participants rated physical contact (70.2%), workload (70.2%) and isolation (66.7%) as being challenges. No other item was rated as a challenge by more than two thirds of participants (*range*=5.3%-59.6%). These findings supported the decision to focus on these three major challenges during the interview phase of this research project.

Table 4.6

Summary of Survey Responses

Challenge	Contact	Workload	Isolation	Media	Salary	Role Model	Sexuality	Friends	Family
Mean	2.43	2.36	2.32	1.94	1.66	1.58	1.34	1.28	1.09
SD	1.03	1.00	1.03	0.89	0.88	0.77	0.55	0.53	0.45
No. of 1s	13	13	15	19	30	31	37	40	50
No. of 2s	12	15	13	21	13	13	14	11	2
No. of 3s	20	18	18	10	8	9	2	2	0
No. of 4s	8	7	7	3	2	0	0	0	1
No. of 2/3/4s	40	40	38	34	23	22	16	13	3
% of 1s	22.8	22.8	26.3	33.3	52.6	54.4	64.9	70.2	87.7
% of 2s	21.1	26.3	22.8	36.8	22.8	22.8	24.6	19.3	3.5
% of 3s	35.1	31.6	31.6	17.5	14.0	15.8	3.5	3.5	0.0
% of 4s	14.0	12.3	12.3	5.3	3.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.8
% of 2/3/4s	70.2	70.2	66.7	59.6	40.4	38.6	28.1	22.8	5.3

Mean item scores were also reported by the separate demographics variables collected at the beginning of the survey. These variables were age, years of teaching experience, the number of men employed at the school they work at, whether or not teaching was their first career, the gender of the principal at the school they are employed at, and whether or not they were a parent. These variables have been identified in previous research (e.g., Cooney & Bittner, 2001; Moyles & Cavendish, 2001; Smith, 2008; White, 2011) as potential influences on male primary teachers' perceptions of the gender related challenges they face. Independent samples t-tests were conducted for all variables used in this study. As indicated in table 4.7 below, no

p values were below the 0.05 required to indicate significant differences between these variables. Despite finding no significant differences, I decided to use the mean differences between the demographic variables to assist with the construction of prompt questions that I could potentially use during the interviews.

Participants perceived fear and uncertainty surrounding making physical contact with students as the most difficult challenge ($\bar{X}$=2.43+/-1.03) they faced as male primary teachers. This challenge was perceived as either slight, moderate or critical by 70.2% of participants. The largest mean difference for the physical contact challenge ($\bar{X}_{\Delta}$=0.56) was for the demographic variable concerning whether or not teaching was participants' first career. Participants who had not had a previous career indicated that physical contact was more of a challenge ($\bar{X}$=2.66±1.00) than participants who had a previous career before becoming teachers ($\bar{X}$=2.10±1.03). This demographic variable has the lowest *p* value (0.051) but was statistically insignificant. Most participants had come to the teaching from professions that do not involve a lot of interaction with children; such as management, the public service, banking and the military. The type of previous career participants had did not appear to influence their perception of this challenge, but this demographic variable might have been related to another demographic variable that might have been a contributing factor to this high mean difference.

Participants who had a previous career were likely to have been older than participants who had begun teaching straight out of university. Previous research surrounding male primary teachers has noted that challenges such as uncertainty surrounding physical contact are more difficult for younger, less experienced men (Moyles & Cavendish, 2001; White, 2011). An examination of the age demographic

variable in this study supported this previous research. The mean difference for the age demographic variable ($\bar{X}_{\Delta}$=0.55) was the second largest for the physical contact challenge. Participants between the ages of 21 and 30 rated this challenge as more difficult ($\bar{X}$=2.85±1.07) than participants who were 31 or older ($\bar{X}$=2.30±1.03). Similarly, the experience demographic variable had the third highest mean difference ($\bar{X}_{\Delta}$=0.42) for the physical contact challenge. Participants who had less than six years of experience rated this challenge as more difficult ($\bar{X}$=2.75±1.22) than those with six or more years of teaching experience ($\bar{X}$=2.33±1.03). These findings suggest that age and experience might influence male primary teachers' perceptions of their uncertainty surrounding making physical contact with their students.

The age ($\bar{X}_{\Delta}$=-0.48) and experience ($\bar{X}_{\Delta}$=-0.60) demographic variables also had high mean differences for the workload challenge ($\bar{X}$=2.36±1.00). These results were different to the physical contact results in that this challenge appeared to become more difficult for older and more experienced participants. This finding might be influenced by the possibility that these men have increased responsibilities both in school and out of school due to leadership roles and family commitments. The largest mean difference ($\bar{X}_{\Delta}$=0.74) for the workload challenge was for the demographic variable concerning the number of male primary teachers in participants' schools. Participants who were the only male teacher at their school perceived workload as a more difficult challenge ($\bar{X}$=3.00±1.15) than participants who had one of more male teachers as colleagues ($\bar{X}$=2.26±1.00). This finding supported previous research on male primary teachers (e.g., Smith, 2008) that noted men found additional masculine roles such as moving furniture and coaching sports teams more difficult and time consuming if they were unable to share them with other men.

The demographic variable concerning the number of male primary teachers in participants' schools also had the largest mean difference ($\bar{X}_{\Delta}$=0.62) for the isolation challenge ($\bar{X}$=2.32±1.03). It was unsurprising that perceptions of social isolation were higher for those participants without male teaching colleagues ($\bar{X}$=2.86±0.69) than participants who had one of more male colleagues ($\bar{X}$=2.24±1.03). Male primary teachers in this situation have reported that they struggle to find commonalities with their colleagues and consequently prefer to spend their break times in their office alone (Ashcraft & Sevier, 2006). As this was the reality for some male primary teachers, it is crucial that strategies to be identified to assist men struggling to deal with the challenge of isolation.

These findings led to the construction of prompt questions regarding the factors that contributed to participants' perceptions of these three major challenges. For example, whether participants' perceived workload as harder to deal with as their age and experience increased. These prompt questions were used during the semi structured interview stage of this study as required.

Table 4.7

Summary of Survey Responses and Demographic Variables

		Contact	Workload	Isolation	Media	Salary	Role Model	Sexuality	Friends	Family
M		2.43	2.36	2.32	1.94	1.66	1.58	1.34	1.28	1.09
SD		1.03	1.00	1.03	0.89	0.88	0.77	0.55	0.53	0.45
Age	*n*/53	Contact	Workload	Isolation	Media	Salary	Role Model	Sexuality	Friends	Family
21-30	13	2.85	2.00	2.31	1.77	1.38	1.54	1.31	1.23	1.23
31+	40	2.30	2.48	2.33	2.00	1.75	1.60	1.35	1.30	1.05
M		2.43	2.36	2.32	1.94	1.66	1.58	1.34	1.28	1.09

M difference		0.55	-0.48	-0.02	-0.23	-0.37	-0.06	-0.04	-0.07	0.18
p		0.15	0.15	0.92	0.35	0.35	0.47	0.99	0.69	0.31
Experience	*n*/53	Contact	Workload	Isolation	Media	Salary	Role Model	Sexuality	Friends	Family
0-5	12	2.75	1.92	2.17	1.67	1.38	1.58	1.33	1.15	1.23
6+	41	2.33	2.52	2.37	2.02	1.73	1.59	1.36	1.32	1.05
M		2.43	2.38	2.32	1.94	1.65	1.58	1.35	1.28	1.09
M difference		0.42	-0.60	-0.20	-0.36	-0.35	0.00	-0.02	-0.16	0.18
p		0.23	0.08	0.56	0.22	0.28	0.99	0.97	0.40	0.18
No. of Men	*n*/53	Contact	Workload	Isolation	Media	Salary	Role Model	Sexuality	Friends	Family
1	7	2.43	3.00	2.86	2.00	1.43	2.00	1.29	1.43	1.00
2+	46	2.43	2.29	2.24	1.93	1.68	1.52	1.36	1.26	1.10
M		2.43	2.38	2.32	1.94	1.65	1.58	1.35	1.28	1.09
M difference		0.00	0.71	0.62	0.07	-0.25	0.48	-0.08	0.17	-0.10
p		0.99	0.07	0.14	0.86	0.46	0.13	0.79	0.44	0.56
Principal	*n*/53	Contact	Workload	Isolation	Media	Salary	Role Model	Sexuality	Friends	Family
Male	26	2.23	2.33	2.12	1.88	1.69	1.50	1.33	1.31	1.04
Female	27	2.61	2.43	2.52	2.00	1.61	1.67	1.37	1.25	1.14
M		2.43	2.38	2.32	1.94	1.65	1.58	1.35	1.28	1.09
M difference		-0.38	-0.10	-0.40	-0.12	0.09	-0.17	-0.04	0.06	-0.10
p		0.16	0.53	0.16	0.64	0.80	0.44	0.68	0.74	0.38
Children	*n*/53	Contact	Workload	Isolation	Media	Salary	Role Model	Sexuality	Friends	Family
Yes	34	2.29	2.46	2.21	1.88	1.74	1.56	1.31	1.29	1.06
No	19	2.65	2.25	2.53	2.05	1.50	1.63	1.42	1.25	1.14

M		2.43	2.38	2.32	1.94	1.65	1.58	1.35	1.28	1.09
M difference		-0.36	0.21	-0.32	-0.17	0.24	-0.07	-0.11	0.04	-0.08
p		0.19	0.61	0.28	0.51	0.41	0.75	0.43	0.84	0.45
First Career	*n*/53	Contact	Workload	Isolation	Media	Salary	Role Model	Sexuality	Friends	Family
Yes	32	2.64	2.44	2.50	2.03	1.61	1.72	1.45	1.27	1.12
No	21	2.10	2.29	2.05	1.81	1.71	1.38	1.19	1.29	1.05
M		2.43	2.38	2.32	1.94	1.65	1.58	1.35	1.28	1.09
M difference		0.54	0.16	0.45	0.22	-0.11	0.34	0.26	-0.01	0.07
P		0.05	0.67	0.12	0.38	0.72	0.12	0.11	0.98	0.55

4.6 Conclusion

The quantitative findings presented in this chapter indicated that the gender related challenges surrounding physical contact, workload and isolation were the most difficult for participants in this study. I acknowledge that data from one survey item per challenge is limited in terms of interpretable data, therefore these findings were combined with other data from open ended questions and semi-structured interviews to provide more informed answers to the proposed research questions. The findings and discussion of this study have been divided up into five different chapters. Following this overview and quantitative findings chapter are three thematic chapters focused on the major challenges identified above. A final concluding chapter ties all these chapters together through the lens of SCCT.

These chapters utilised excerpts from the open ended survey responses (*N*=53) and the verbal responses of five interview participants. The interview participants (*n*=5) were purposively sampled from those that self-nominated at the end of the online survey (*N*=18). Participants were selected in order to ensure a variety of ages, schools, years of experience and geographical locations. These participants chose, or were provided with the pseudonyms Fenton, Fred, Harry, James and Steve. Brief contextual information about each participant is provided below.

Fenton is in his 40s and teaches in a mixed gender independent primary school in northern Tasmania. He is in the majority group for every demographic variable, with the exception of not having children. In addition to his current school, Fenton spoke extensively about his experiences in previous schools when he had been younger, less experienced, without male teaching colleagues, and had a male principal.

Fred is in his 60s and teaches in a mixed gender independent primary school in southern Tasmania. He is in the majority group for every demographic variable. Fred made numerous positive references to the fact he had other male colleagues in his present school.

Harry is in his 60s and teachers in a mixed gender catholic primary school in southern Tasmania. He is in the majority group for every demographic variable, with the exception of having had a previous career in the public service. Harry consistently talked about the differences between his current female, and previous male principal.

James is in his 30s and teaches in a mixed gender catholic primary school in northern Tasmania. He is in the majority group for every demographic variable, with

the exception of currently being the only male teacher in his school. James frequently compared his current teaching situation to previous schools where he had male teaching colleagues and a male principal.

Steve is in his 30s and teaches in a mixed gender independent primary school in northern Tasmania. He is in the majority group for every demographic variable, with the exception of having had a previous career in nursing. At the time of the interviews Steve had another part-time male teacher at his school. He consistently discussed the differences between this rare situation and the more common experience of being the only male teacher in his school.

Fenton, Fred, Harry, James and Steve all commented on the three major challenges without prompting from the researcher. The amount of data presented from each interview participant is reflective of how much they talked about each challenge. Participants who found a challenge to be more difficult tended to discuss it in more depth and are therefore represented more regularly throughout the following discussion chapters.

Chapter 5

Fear and Uncertainty Surrounding Physical Contact

5.1 Introduction

As identified in the statistical analysis of the previous chapter, fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact was the most substantial gender related challenge faced by participants in this study. This is unsurprising given that the literature has consistently identified physical contact with children as a major issue of concern for male teachers. Ashcraft and Sevier (2006) noted male primary teachers were highly aware of the dangers of making physical contact with their students. Cushman (2005b) similarly observed male primary teachers were fearful of being falsely accused of making inappropriate contact with their students. Clearly fear and uncertainty related to physical contact with students is an issue of such gravity that it requires substantial exploration and discussion in this thesis.

Consequently, this chapter draws on research findings to examine the perceptions of some male teachers as they spoke about their experiences of dealing with fear and uncertainty related to physical contact issues. The majority of males in this study identified physical contact as a major challenge, yet the intent of this chapter is to move beyond merely describing those challenges to investigate coping strategies utilised in everyday teaching practice. In order to fully engage with the quality and quantity of participant data in relation to this challenge in a clear and coherent manner, this chapter is presented in four parts. These parts will focus on (a) the policy, (b) the challenge, (c) coping strategies, and (d) implications.

In part A I review 14 physical contact policy documents from across Australia that speak to the expected conduct of teachers. This review focussed on guidelines relevant to situations that are deemed appropriate for teachers, both male and female, to make physical contact with their students. Policy guidelines and participant perceptions of appropriate contact situations were then compared for consistency. This comparison is important in light of previous research (e.g., Cushman 2005b) stating that the fear male primary teachers experience in relation to physical contact is exacerbated by their uncertainty about the contexts in which it is, and is not appropriate.

In part B key factors that contribute to the fear and uncertainty that participants in this study experienced are considered and unpacked. Important themes that emerged included gendered double standards, false accusations, and the influence of the media. These themes and the relationships between them are explored in order to present a more complete picture of participants' experiences of this challenge.

In part C l examine how participants in this study coped with experiences of fear and uncertainty in relation to physical contact. This examination focused on the coping strategies participants used, the support they perceived they had, and the level of coping efficacy they possessed. As indicated in chapter two, coping efficacy, as a component of SCCT offers important theoretical insights which are bought to bear on the findings in this part.

Finally, in part D implications of findings presented in the previous three sections are discussed. Broad generalisations are beyond the scope and methodology of this study. Yet, I believe it is critically important to tentatively explore how the experiences of teachers in this study might help other male teachers to navigate the omnipresent challenges associated with physical contact in schools.

5.2 Part A: Policy and Practice

Policy is designed to influence practice. Education is no different from other professions in this sense, and there are multiple policies at state and federal level which inform day to day practice in schools and classrooms. Literature from previous research (e.g., Cushman 2005b) has found that the fear and uncertainty experienced by male teachers is exacerbated by a lack of knowledge and understanding related to policy. Male teachers have reported that they are unsure of what they can and cannot do. Participants comments prompted this review of policy. I was interested in comparing their perceptions of what they could and could not do with relevant policy guidelines. Of interest was the level to which different policies from different states in Australia were consistent or inconsistent, and how potential lack of clarity might have inadvertently contributed to the difficulty of this challenge.

Initially this review focussed on the policies of the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission and Christian Schools Tasmania, because the majority of participants were employed in these sectors. Due to a lack of specific information in regards to areas such as the comforting of an upset student, further policies from around Australia were accessed via organisation websites (see Table 3.3). In all, 14 policies and teacher code of conduct documents were reviewed. This review included policies from all six Australian states, the Northern Territory and the Australian Capital Territory. Both government and non-government policies were reviewed, as well as the policies of organisations such as Edmund Rice, who govern numerous Australian catholic schools.

The structure of this part of the chapter which focuses on policy review has been influenced by a similar review conducted by Cushman (2005b), who reviewed

the New Zealand Educational Institute's Code of Practice. Cushman concluded that "appropriate contact situations" (p. 235) were limited to those involved in physical restraint, first aid and physical education. These three contexts have been used as a framework for this section. Each part will include a review of policy wording, and relevant data from participants detailing their perceptions of policy and its impact on their practice. These data sources are compared to show that the majority of participant perceptions do align with policy directives in these 'appropriate contact situations'. Other situations not identified by Cushman, but referred to by policy and or participants will also be examined.

5.2.1 Physical Restraint

Of the 14 policy documents analysed, physical restraint was unanimously identified as an appropriate contact situation. The Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission (2007) guidelines on appropriate physical contact stated that physical contact is appropriate "in order to prevent harm or further harm to students, self and others" (p. 4). An interpretation of this wording suggests that teachers can physically restrain students in order to protect themselves or others, yet there was no specific information on how they should and should not do this. Like the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission, Christian Schools Tasmania mentions physical restraint in the more detailed 'physical contact with students' section of their code of conduct for teachers. They stated that physical contact is appropriate to protect students, self and others as long as the physical intervention is "proportional to the circumstances" (Christian Schools Tasmania, 2015, p. 12). Even though such wording suggests a common sense approach, it is very subjective and highly likely to change from one context to the next depending on the strength of the student and teacher involved. This

subjectivity might make male teachers uncertain if they would have support from leadership if they decided to take physical action in order to protect a student or themselves. The Christian Schools Tasmania guidelines also contain numerous cautionary statements such as advising teachers to be mindful of the potential for touch to be misconstrued, which add further subjectivity and uncertainty. The more detailed directives the Christian Schools Tasmania guidelines contained were likely to be helpful to some male primary teachers, yet they still did not contain specific information about how a teacher should restrain a student if required.

When other physical contact policies around Australia were reviewed, it appeared that the South Australian guidelines for staff working in education settings (Government of South Australia, 2011) contained some more specific directions on how a teacher should and should not restrain a student. The 'appropriate physical contact' section of the guidelines contained a section specifically about safe practice when using physical restraint. Along with typical cautionary statements such as using "reasonable force" (p. 17), teachers are instructed to grip clothing rather than the body whenever possible, take care to avoid contact with the breasts if restraining a female, and continue talking to the child throughout the incident so they understand that physical restraint will stop as soon as it is no longer necessary. Teachers should not apply force to the head or neck, restrict breathing or hold a child by the hair or ear. These appear to be common sense directions, yet the lack of specific definitions for terms such as 'reasonable' might contribute to male primary teachers being uncertain of exactly what physical contact they can make, and fearful of making contact that others might perceive as unreasonable.

Male primary teachers who are fearful of making unreasonable contact could resort to non-physical interventions to managing violent behaviour. The Government of South Australia (2011) suggest that these more verbal strategies could include directing the child to a safe place while directing other students to move away, talking to the child about the problem and what will happen if their behaviour continues, and sending for assistance from other staff when required. These guidelines do offer more specific directions than many other reviewed policies, yet questions still remain. For example, teachers are given no direction on making contact with the groin of either male or female students. As other body parts such as the head and breasts are specifically mentioned, the omission of this and other areas could be interpreted as implying that they can be touched during the physical restraint of a student. Teachers are unlikely to make this assumption and could experience fear and uncertainty about physically restraining a student because of the lack of specific direction in policy documents.

Despite a lack of specific information in policy documents, a review of their contents revealed that male primary teachers could feel confident making physical contact to protect themselves and others from harm. The majority of participants in this study also held this opinion. Many participants described how they had, and would continue to separate students who were fighting or physically endangering themselves or others. For example;

> I have had to separate students who were fighting and have never been reprimanded for doing so. I would always attempt to stop a student hurting another student physically or otherwise (Survey Respondent 37, August 2013).

> I would stop students who were fighting or attempting to hurt another student. This can involve things like physically restraining them until they cool down or grabbing a students' wrist before they hit someone (Survey Respondent 44, August 2013).

These and other similar comments clearly illustrated that participants believed it was appropriate for them to make physical contact in order to protect students from harm. Participants indicated that the immediate safety of their students was more important to them than worrying about other people scrutinising their actions. It seemed that in potentially dangerous situations many participants made the quick decision that making physical contact was in the best interests of their students. Participants willingly made physical contact to assist their students despite any fear and uncertainty they might have experienced. Many participants also stated they had made the same decision in situations involving first aid.

5.2.2 First Aid

Similar to physical restraint, the majority of policies identified first aid as a situation in which it was appropriate for a teacher to make physical contact with a student. No policy wording inferred it was inappropriate to make physical contact in first aid situations, but some policies such as the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission (2007) provided no direction for teachers in these situations. Christian Schools Tasmania (2015) and other organisations that identified first aid as appropriate (e.g., Government of South Australia, 2011; Northern Territory Government, 2011) stated that any physical contact for the purposes of student care must be age, maturity, and health appropriate. Teachers were advised that they should always ask permission before making physical contact with a student, and advise

them of their intention to touch the specific body parts required to assess their injury. The review of all 14 policies revealed that it was appropriate for male teachers to make physical contact with students in first aid situations, as long as the directions described above were followed.

Situations involving first aid were also identified by the majority of participants as being appropriate for them to make contact with their students. Steve stated that he was willing to make physical contact that was in "the interest of the child", and said that this would include first aid. Other comments included;

> I ensure that any physical contact, due to first aid, upset or relocation is observed by a senior colleague and that it is appropriate zonal contact (Survey Respondent 13, August 2013)

> I have and will continue to physically assist injured students. If students are in pain I am more concerned with helping them as quickly as possible, rather than worrying about what other people would think of the physical contact I make (Survey Respondent 23, August 2013).

These and other comments revealed that participants' perceptions of first aid as a situation in which it was appropriate for them to make physical contact were predominantly consistent with policy documents. As with situations involving physical restraint, these perceptions might have been influenced by a belief that student safety was more important than worrying about what other people might think of them making physical contact with their students. It seemed that preventing further injury to their students caused many participants in this study to disregard their self-protective mindset and make physical contact in order to assist their students.

The majority of participants indicated they would make physical contact to assist students in need of first aid, yet other participants appeared to be less willing to do this. Fenton detailed an alternative approach the only involved contact when absolutely necessary;

> Fenton: If it is a cut or scrape I have given them a wipe or a Band-Aid etc to use or put on but I will not actually administer that myself. In most of those cases it is really a noncontact all the time sort of situation. If someone had broken a limb and I had to carry them I would do that but I would want a female member of staff present who said, “Can you carry them please” and then escorted me down to first aid. Thankfully I've never been in any life-threatening situations but if you're in a situation like that then you have to respond. There does come a point when political correctness does have to take a back seat such as if someone is drowning.
>
> Researcher: So for you that line of actually making physical contact is almost death?
>
> Fenton: Yes. Unless there is an absolute necessity to me to physically be involved I will stand back. I can talk, I can guide, I can hand things (Fenton, Interview 1, August 2014).

Fenton’s comments clearly indicated that he had adopted an approach that was non-contact in nearly all situations. It was likely that he had developed this approach primarily for self-protection, as he was very fearful of being accused of making inappropriate physical contact with students in these situations. Fenton’s fear and resultant self-protection mindset appeared to have been a significant influence on his behaviour in situations where his student had minor injuries, but he did acknowledge

that he would act and make physical contact in life-threatening situations. His reference to political correctness having to take a back seat in severe situations might have suggested that he was uncertain if physical contact was even appropriate in these instances. Alternatively, Fenton might have been saying that he wanted to make physical contact in first aid situations but believed it was politically correct for him not to do so. Either way, it seems nonsensical for male primary teachers such as Fenton to be uncomfortable assisting injured students until their injuries become life threatening.

5.2.3 Other Situations

The policies analysed contained a variety of other situations in which it was appropriate for a teacher to make physical contact with their students. These situations included comforting a distressed student (e.g., NSW Government, 2015), physical education and music demonstrations (e.g., Brisbane Catholic Education, 2008), and congratulatory handshakes or pats on the shoulder (e.g., Christian Schools Tasmania, 2015). These other situations were mentioned by some policies but were omitted from many others. It was therefore difficult to determine if these organisations considered physical contact to be unacceptable in these situations, or if they had not even considered them. This inconsistency was added to by the wording of different policies giving teachers conflicting advice on the same situation.

One example of policies giving contradictory advice was on the appropriateness of making physical contact to comfort a distressed child. The New South Wales professional responsibilities guidelines (NSW Government, 2015) stated that it was appropriate to provide reassurance by putting an arm around a younger student who is hurt or seeking comfort, whereas South Australian teachers are

directed to discourage younger children from inappropriate expectations of hugs (Government of South Australia, 2011). The Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission (2007) code of conduct made no mention of the appropriateness of a hug in this situation, and this lack of information was consistent across the Christian Schools Tasmania guidelines (2015) as well as the great majority of teacher code of conduct documents across Australia. When physical contact guidelines do not offer clear advice, and guidelines from similar bodies around Australia offer conflicting advice, it is easy to understand why men might be uncertain about what they should do and fearful of doing the wrong thing.

Hugging an Upset Student

Participants' in this study had contrasting views on the appropriateness of hugging an upset student. The majority of participants in this study indicated that they would not be comfortable making physical contact in this situation. Numerous participants made succinct statement such as "I do not feel comfortable hugging students in my class" (Survey Respondent 27, August 2013). Despite this majority view, a vocal minority believed it was vitally important that male primary teachers did hug their students;

> I don't want my students thinking that male teachers can't give them a hug (Harry, Interview 1, August 2014)

> The worst thing male teachers can do is withdraw - how can you not console a prep child by giving them a hug? Men can and should be nurturing as well (Survey Respondent 26, August 2013).

This comment demonstrates that there are male primary teachers who think it is appropriate for men to hug an upset young student. Despite the passion of participants

such as Harry these beliefs were not consistent across the majority of participants in this study. Participants also had conflicting views in relation to making physical contact during in class demonstrations.

In Class Demonstrations

The only subject that participants referred to in relation to the appropriateness of physical contact was health and physical education. Most primary schools in Tasmania have part time specialist health and physical education, but classroom teachers can be involved in these lessons;

> When we go to the pool with the preps and I get in and the kids are doing star floats, I'll grab their legs and pull them apart so they can feel what the position is like. With the 2/3s I'll still get in the pool but I might not be quite so hands-on, and by the grade 4/5/6 you're not in the pool anymore. If we are doing something like netball or soccer I might position someone correctly and say "put your body here, kick it that way" but only if it is really necessary because they're not getting it (Steve, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I do not get involved with gymnastics, swimming or after last year; dance. Very sad, but I have had a few problems last year with safety issues. I guided a child and was reprimanded, thus why I won't do those activities any more. I will do activities that do not require me to physically assist my students (Survey Respondent 45, August 2013).

Steve's comments about physically guiding students who were uncertain of correct technique were echoed by several other participants. These comments indicated that some male primary teachers believed it was appropriate for them to make physical contact with their students in order to physically assist students with the correct

performance of a skill or movement. The second comment above indicated that not all participants shared this belief, or had positive experiences with making physical contact in physical education situations. This survey respondent gave no contextual information about how he did the guiding, student age, or whom the reprimand had come from; which made it hard to make a judgement on the appropriateness of his actions. His, and other similar comments did indicate a lack of participant consensus about the appropriateness of making physical contact during in class demonstrations.

Congratulating Students

There was more agreement evident in participants' perceptions of the appropriateness of making physical contact when congratulating students. Most participants who referred to these situations indicated they believed making physical contact was appropriate. For example;

> I will give students a pat on the shoulder or upper back if they have done a good job. I think small gestures like this are important for congratulating and building rapport with students (Survey Respondent 28, August 2013)

> I give students high fives or fist bumps when they have done a good job; the boys in particular really like this (Survey Respondent 47, August 2013).

These comments were consistent with physical contact guidelines from organisations such as Christian Schools Tasmania (2015) that listed shaking hands, and pats on the upper arm or back as being acceptable physical contact. Participants believed that making this low level non-intrusive physical contact was an important part of building rapport with students without needing the same level of physical contact as their female colleagues. These and other comments also revealed that participants were

very particular about where on their students' bodies they made contact with in the event that they did choose to make physical contact in order to congratulate them.

Body Parts

Participant's comments revealed that if they ever made physical contact with their students, they were very conscious of where on their students' body they contact. Some men made specific reference to the parts of the body they believed were appropriate to make contact with;

> If I have to touch them then I'm a bit more particular and specific about where I touch them and how I touch them - only on the shoulder or elbow (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014)

> In relation to comforting a student I only ever put one hand on either their shoulder or back and make sure my stance and body position is open and positive. In relation to younger students who want to hold your hand; I allow it. But when they want to sit on your knee or lean up against you I say to them that I need some space to read the book better (Survey Respondent 9, August 2013).

These and other comments demonstrated that participants in this study were very aware of which parts of students' bodies they made physical contact with. These remarks echoed previous research on male primary teachers such as Ashcraft and Sevier (2006). Similar to James above, the actions Fred and others described were consistent with guidelines such as those written by Christian Schools Tasmania (2015). It was also evident that participants tried to make sure they did not embarrass or offend their students if they choose not to respond to requests for physical contact.

This behaviour was consistent with the South Australian guidelines for staff working in education settings (Government of South Australia, 2011) and highly relevant for those male primary teachers working in the early childhood area.

Fred's acceptance of physical contact as a part of his teaching can be partly attributed to his experience in the early childhood area. Students of this age are much more tactile, especially when in need of support and reassurance (Smith, 2008). As these younger students require more physical help and comfort those men who teach in early childhood are likely to become accustomed to a higher level of physical contact than men who teach older students.

Student Age

Participant data suggested that there was a perceived difference between making contact with a grade six student and making contact with a younger early childhood student. This difference might be because a comforting hug for a five year old is seen as more socially acceptable and innocent than a similar act with a more mature pre-teen. It is difficult to define the exact age at which it becomes less appropriate to make physical contact with students. Despite this difficulty, many participants suggested there was a difference between making physical contact with early childhood (kinder to grade two) students, and making physical contact with upper primary (grade three to six) students;

> I think the line is about grade 3. When they are younger in grade 2/3 I think it is more acceptable that the girls might come and have a kick of the football and things like that and it's a bit easier to build relationships without being so aware that you do need to be a bit careful. I think that upper primary is where you become aware of it [physical contact] and need to consider it. That might

> be to do with their development because they're reaching puberty and it might be seen as a sexual thing. So from a male point of view if you've got prepubescent kids then its danger time, but before that people maybe wouldn't consider it. If it's a male teacher and a grade 5/6 girl it is clearly very difficult. So just make sure you're a bit more hands off. I generally am very hands on with kids but once it gets to grade 5/6 girls even a pat on the back you just don't go there I think (Steve, Interview 1, August 2014)
>
> I am much more aware of this [physical contact] with students once they get to about grade three and are considered upper primary (Survey Respondent 10, August 2013).

These comments reveal that male teachers are much more aware of making physical contact with students once they have entered the upper primary grades and started to mature and develop physically. Steve appeared to be comfortable making physical contact with students but believed that it was less appropriate for male primary teachers to make contact with older students, particularly female. Consequently the physical contact he made with his students decreased as their age increased. Steve's comments imply that he would have to constantly adjust his teaching approach and level of physical contact in order to ensure he was interacting appropriately with all students. The majority of policy documents reviewed made no mention of student age affecting the appropriateness of physical contact, yet this did appear to be an important consideration for the participants in this study.

5.2.4 Conclusion

This policy review has identified both consistency and inconsistency between the directions given to teachers in relation to physical contact. The majority of

policies and participants agreed that it was appropriate to make physical contact with students in situations involving physical restraint and first aid; yet contrasting opinions were evident for other situations such as in class demonstrations and hugging upset students. A review of the 14 policies revealed that many made no mention of these other situations. These omissions made it impossible to ascertain whether these organisations viewed contact as appropriate or inappropriate in these situations. Further inconsistency was evident when the policy documents that did refer to these situations were in direct conflict. Participant opinions were also in direct conflict when referring to situations such as hugging an upset child. These contrasting opinions were evident across several situations, but they did not appear to have been influenced by the lack of content and clarity in policy documents.

Physical contact guidelines such as those written by the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission (2007) and Christian Schools Tasmania (2015) could be improved by more specific content about the appropriateness of physical contact in all the situations identified in this review. Despite the glaring omissions from these and other guidelines, no participants in this study directly stated that policy contributed to their fear and uncertainty in relation to making physical contact with their students. The lack of conversation on policy suggested that some participants were likely not aware of the contents or shortcomings of the policies dictating the appropriateness of their actions. As these policies do not appear to have been a strong contributor to the fear and uncertainty experienced by males in this study, I will now examine participant data in more detail to ascertain what factors do contribute to the difficulty of this challenge.

5.3 Part B: The Challenge

In this section I investigate participants' fear and uncertainty associated with making physical contact with their students. This investigation details participants' perceptions of the gendered double standards they believed they were subjected to, and the societal expectations and perceptions that influenced their behaviour as male primary teachers. These themes and the relationships between them are explored to present a more complete picture of participants' perceptions and experiences in relation to this challenge.

5.3.1 Gendered Double Standards

Many of the male teachers in this study stated that they believed men and women were expected to behave differently in relation to physical contact. Numerous participants stated that they had experienced double standards in terms of what was acceptable physical contact for male and female teachers to make with their students. Cushman (2005b) identified these double standards in her work on male primary teachers and reported that they often resulted in physical contact policies being followed by men and ignored by women. This situation revealed an obvious inequity as these male teachers felt that they could not comfort an upset child like a parent or female teacher could, without putting themselves at risk. Some examples of the numerous participants that commented on these double standards include;

> Female staff who sit next to their students and give them a hug and say "tell me about your weekend" are being normal but if a man was to do it you are being too 'familiar'; which I think is the nice way of saying you are being creepy. I don't actually want to be able to sit next to students and hold their hands, but I resent the fact that if I was to do anything like that it would

> immediately be suspicious. I learnt that one very quickly at my first school when someone said to me "oh as a male you shouldn't really do that" and from that point on it really stood out in my mind. I can remember the fear that that event elicited in me and that has stuck with me. I find it a stupid situation when I cannot act in same way as my female colleagues (Fenton, Interview 1, August 2014)
>
> I come from a big family and am used to hugging my kids, parents etc. I do not do this at school even if students are crying because I have always had the impression that it was not something male teachers should do. I sometimes look at my female colleagues hugging students and get a bit jealous that they can do that and I can't (Survey respondent 2, August 2013)
>
> It is ok for female staff to hug/cuddle children when they are hurt/upset/crying/or other occasions where it is appropriate to do so, but it is not ok for men when the same circumstances exist (Survey respondent 17, August 2013)
>
> When I taught kinder this [physical contact] was a big challenge. Four-year-old children occasionally needed a cuddle or some form of physical touch; which our female teacher assistants were able to give with almost no second thought. However, a couple of adults told me that it was inappropriate for me to do the same (Survey respondent 19, August 2013).

These statements support the perception of gendered double standards in terms of appropriate physical contact. Participants stated that they believed it was socially acceptable for female teachers to hug their students, yet they did not believe this acceptance extended to them. These beliefs have been contributed to by that fact that

men have been directly told that it is not acceptable for them to make the same physical contact as their female colleagues. The experiences of these men have led them to believe that they should avoid making physical contact with their students. The statements of participants in this study are consistent with Cushman's (2005b) argument surrounding the different ways that men and women interpret policy.

Participant data from this study might also help answer another question posed by Cushman (2005b); whether physical contact guidelines are actually written for all teachers, or just male teachers. The physical contact policy documents analysed in the previous section did not specify gender, or that a male teacher should not comfort a child in distress; yet participants reported a strong but unspoken perception that this was less appropriate behaviour for men. The comments above made direct reference to the fact that participants in this study believed that they had to behave differently to their female colleagues in terms of physical contact. These beliefs indicated that although policy documents were officially written for all teachers, the pragmatic reality of gendered double standards meant that it was much more important for men to follow the directives they contained.

The gendered double standards referred to by participants in this study have been strong influenced by societal perceptions of what is appropriate behaviour for men and women. Numerous participants made comments about their fear of other people perceiving their behaviour as inappropriate. Their remarks did not just concern whether or not physical contact was appropriate in situations such as physical education demonstrations, comforting an upset child or first aid. Many participants stated they would be happy to help, and even hug, a sad or injured child but were fearful about how someone walking past might perceive this act:

> For me personally I think when a child is sad a little cuddle should be acceptable, but whether or not it is debatable. If I am ever going to do that I always have to consider who else is around and the context they are going to view it from. I think it [physical contact] is more about how someone else would view it as I certainly don't have an issue with it. I think this only applies to men. If a female did it I don't think anyone would raise an eyebrow but yes definitely for a man I think it is debatable (James, Interview 1, August 2014).

James' comments again mention double standards for male and female teacher in regards to physical contact. He clearly indicated that he felt he had to carefully consider the perceptions of others before comforting an upset child, whereas he believed female teachers did not have to do this. This feeling is consistent with previous research on male primary teachers (e.g., Ashcraft & Sevier, 2006; Cooney & Bittner, 2001; Mills et al., 2008), which suggests that this fear and uncertainty might be less about the actual physical contact and more to do with worrying about what adults walking past might think if they saw a man reassuring a child with a hug.

Fear of perceptions of others was not something that participants in this study were concerned about when they were teaching their full class or were in a public setting. Conversely, gendered double standards have made participants in this study very fearful of situations where they are at risk of being alone with a student. Several participants mentioned their classrooms at break times as an example of these risky situations. Fred stated that he was "very conscious of a child coming in to the classroom by themselves, particularly girls." Fenton described a more specific situation that was familiar to many participants:

> If I'm sitting in my classroom at lunch and one of the girls walks in I'm like "what do you want? What are you doing? No you can't stay in here and read, you can go to the library". Whereas if half a dozen come in to do something I am like "that's fine". Again it's not me thinking this looks bad it's me thinking another person might look in and say "why is that child by themselves?" Which is bizarre because you would expect them to say "oh that child is in the classroom is there a teacher there? Oh there is a teacher there, that's okay". I tend to find myself thinking that they will look in and be concerned at seeing a male teacher in there whereas for females I don't think this is any issue at all. If people saw it as a caring teacher doing their job it wouldn't be a problem, but they tend to see a man first and the teacher second. I know for a fact that in all the places that I've worked women do not feel that need [to move to a public place when one on one with a student] and I don't think it's even ever comes into their mind, but it does for men (Fenton, Interview 2, November 2014).

Fenton's comments suggest that others perceive male and female teachers differently, specifically in regards to how appropriate it is for them to have small numbers of students in their classrooms during break time. His remarks reveal that he believed that male primary teachers are viewed as less trustworthy than their female colleagues. The fact that Fenton stated that he felt people would see him as a man first and teacher second spoke volumes about how he believed male primary teachers were perceived by other people. These perceptions were a strong influence on the behaviour of Fenton and other participants because they were highly fearful of their actions being misinterpreted and perceived as inappropriate by other people.

5.3.2 False Accusations

Many of the comments made by participants in this study about avoiding physical contact were delivered in combination with remarks indicating a fear of being falsely accused of acting inappropriately. This fear has been identified by previous literature on male primary teachers (e.g., Ashcraft & Sevier, 2006; Gosse, 2011; Smedley, 2007). Numerous participants were concerned about their genuine actions and attempts to assist students being misinterpreted, and fearful of the consequences of any misinterpretation;

> It [awareness of not making physical contract with students] comes from a deep-seated fear, a genuine and valid one, as a result of how males in a nurturing role are still viewed by women and indeed society. One look at the news shows just how ruinous a misinterpretation or false accusation can be for a male. So who in their right mind would put themselves in any situation that could possibly lead to a complaint of any sort? The media like to say they're blameless but let's face it the remotest hint that a male somewhere has acted inappropriately they are all over it and regardless of what the reality of the situation might be they make sure it's plastered everywhere. So I simply just avoid it [physical contact] at all costs. Thankfully no one has ever said to me "God you are a heartless bastard", even though you sometimes feel that. For me it's just a case of I don't want there to be any possibility of any misunderstanding or misinterpreting about what is going on (Fenton, Interview 1, August 2014)

> Occasionally if a child is doing the wrong thing I'll pick them up and carry them. If I do that, I hold them around the waist at arm's length so they can't

> kick me and they are looking the other way. If they have to be carried I'll generally carry them with my fists held out so people can see where my hands are and that they are not tucked away. So I'm just mindful of appearances and the fact it could be misconstrued. So I make it very obvious that there is nothing going on here (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014).

These and other comments indicated that participants in this study were very fearful of their actions being misinterpreted or misconstrued, and very aware of the potential consequences for them if this occurred. Previous research (e.g., Gosse, 2011) has similarly noted that male primary teachers are very cautious in their interactions with students because of the potential for accusations of inappropriate conduct when doing what many women would consider accepted ways of nurturing their young pupils. The fear felt by participants in this study was underpinned by a belief that men and women were treated differently in the instance of an accusation. Fenton's comments suggest that men who work with young children are perceived as suspicious by society. This belief was supported by previous research (e.g., Bhana & Moosa, 2016; Mills et al., 2008; Smith, 2008) that stated that male primary teachers have to deal with societal suspicions of being paedophiles, sexually deviant and therefore dangerous to children. If male primary teachers are truly perceived this way by society, then their fear of the consequences of a misinterpretation appeared entirely justified.

Fenton was particularly vocal on this topic, primarily because he had seen colleagues at his previous schools treated very differently following an accusation;

> I have been in two schools where a staff member has been accused of inappropriate behaviour. In one instance the allegations were a complete

> fabrication and the male teacher was cleared, it was just a kid with issues who decided he was going to pick on a teacher who had given him a hard time for stuffing around in the choir. But I got to see firsthand just how males are dealt with and the impact it had. And this wasn't a single man, this was a married man with young children and no history of any problems whatsoever and he went through hell. Colleagues, parents etc all avoided him like the plague and he eventually left. I remember hearing a lot about that incident and everyone was talking about it. In the other instance the perpetrator was actually a female and she was guilty and it virtually had no publicity whatsoever. I didn't even know about it until a colleague told me about it about a month later. I had to go searching on the net to find even the tiniest reference to it. So this was a female who had actually done something inappropriate and the boys' fathers just called it life experience. They said "let's just chalk it up to life experience, they just got it a bit early" and I just thought "what the fuck?" If it had been a male teacher and a girl it would not have been hushed up. It would have been on the front page, it would have been publicly known, it would have been on the news and it would have been the end of someone's career (Fenton, Interview 2, November 2014).

Fenton's experience best reflected other participants' perceptions that male teachers can be left unsupported in situations where they are falsely accused, whereas their female teachers can be far less affected even if they are guilty. Although a number of female teachers have been suspended for inappropriate behaviour in recent years (e.g., Baskin, 2014; Killick, 2016; Olding, 2013), participants believed they were far more

vulnerable to accusations. This view was underpinned by a belief that male primary teachers were perceived as less trustworthy than their female colleagues.

If this is indeed the case, then these perceptions appear to be in direct opposition to the numerous calls (e.g., Carrington, et al., 2007; Martin & Marsh, 2005) for more male primary teachers found in both academia and the mainstream media over the last 15 years. The dichotomy this scenario presented for male primary teachers was that they were simultaneously perceived as both valuable and suspicious. Numerous participants pointed to the media as being a strong influence on these contradictory perceptions and the fear and uncertainty they resulted in.

5.3.3 The Media's Constant Shadow

Mainstream media reflects the dominant view and perceptions held by society (Freedman, 2002). Therefore, if the media, as Fenton described above, jumps on every opportunity to highlight inappropriate action by male primary teachers, then societal perceptions of them are likely to suffer. It appeared that the knowledge of seeing how former male colleagues were treated following a false accusation or misinterpretation, combined with the media sensationalising cases of high profile men (usually non teachers) acting inappropriately with young children had given some participants a sense of inevitability when it came to misinterpretations and accusations;

> I've always battled with that one and you kind of wait for the e-mail to arrive or the call to the office to arrive; you know "hey Fred we've had a complaint." It is out there and you're always waiting, but I just figure no I'm doing my job and it goes with my job; it's just that you are regularly reminded through the media about it as an issue. I definitely felt a lot more scrutinised because of

> those high-profile cases. The media is fairly relentless and very constant; it is a bit of shadow (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014)
>
> This [media treatment of male primary teachers] really pisses me off. Why do female teachers not receive the same discouragement and suspicion (Survey respondent 3, August 2013)
>
> The seemingly constant media reporting of abusive behaviour towards children by males in coaching and teaching positions does create a sense of fear and unease, and a sense of waiting for someone to make a complaint (Survey respondent 20, August 2013).

The comments of these and other participants indicated that some male primary teachers are in constant fear of being falsely accused of making inappropriate physical contact with a student and being the subject of the next negative male teacher related headline. This feeling might be contributed to male primary teachers being fearful of people conflating high profile paedophilia cases with other men who regularly interact with children, such as themselves. It might seem strange for male primary teachers to think the actions of high profile paedophiles put the spotlight on the behaviour of all men, and consequently affects their reputations; yet that is what participants in this study appeared to be doing. This conflation has resulted in participants perceiving a noticeably increased scrutiny of their actions and motivations. This finding aligns with previous research from Burn and Pratt-Adams (2015) who noted that male teachers' feel highly scrutinised so they self-surveil, and consciously avoid making physical contact with their students. The majority of allegations of child abuse against teachers are found to be false (Cushman, 2007), but their high media profile appeared

to have an impact on the participants in this study long after the actual stories had left the headlines.

Participants' fear of false accusations was primarily driven by a belief that one accusation would ruin their reputation and destroy their career;

> I think for me it has been drummed in that you need to be very careful, as you never want to get yourself into any situation that anyone could say anything. As a male you just need to be super careful about that. It only takes a bit of mud and it sticks so you just don't want anything like that to be said. It only takes one problem to come along and you could be a 20 year trained teacher and you get one issue and that's that (Steve, Interview 1, August 2014)

> Over my teaching journey, if kids don't want to do any activities, they fabricate stories that can wreak lives and careers. I was lucky, but I had to support a male colleague whose career was destroyed by vindictive kids/families. Subsequently, we lost a great teacher (Survey respondent 45, August 2013)

> Negative stories are jumped on and highlighted whereas positive stories and acquittals of innocent men are given much less publicity. There needs to be more equal reporting and less tarnishing of male teachers reputations by the actions of the few. These few who are accused of acting improperly are often presumed guilty until proven innocent, and even then, their career is likely over (Survey respondent 53, August 2013).

These comments indicated that participants in this study believed that as soon as a male teacher was accused of inappropriate behaviour, their reputations and careers

were ruined. Participants indicated that these drastic consequences appeared to be consistent regardless of the accused's innocence or guilt, or years of experience. These comments also indicated that the media's reporting of accusations was unbalanced and damaging to male teachers' reputations. This belief was supported by the Commonwealth of Australia (1998) who noted that the media coverage of schools and teachers was often negative and inaccurate, and consistently reinforced community stereotypes and prejudices. The result of unbalanced media coverage contributing to negative societal perceptions of male primary teachers was that many participants in this study had chosen to employ a hands off approach whenever possible in order to protect themselves from potential allegations of inappropriate conduct and therefore preserve their career and reputation.

5.3.4 Conclusion

In this section I have investigated the fear and uncertainty participants experienced in relation to making physical contact with their students. This fear and uncertainty appeared to have been strongly influenced by gendered double standards and societal expectations and perceptions of how men, and more specifically male primary teachers should act. Participants were extremely fearful of being falsely accused of acting inappropriately and some had consequently chosen to avoid physical contact in order to protect themselves. Despite the fear and uncertainty they experienced in relation to physical contact, all participants in this study indicated that they intended to persist in the profession. This persistence suggested that participants had developed sufficient coping strategies and supports to deal with the challenges they faced in their profession. These strategies, and other aspects that positively

influenced male primary teachers' capability to persist in the profession will be examined in the next part of this chapter.

5.4 Part C: Coping Strategies and Coping Efficacy

In this section I will use SCCT (Lent et al., 1994) as a lens to investigate how participants in this study were able to cope with the fear and uncertainty they experience in relation to physical contact. Lent et al. stated that a person's behaviour is affected by personal and environmental factors. Environmental factors such as strong supports and weak challenges can positively influence a person's career choices, such as persisting within their profession. Data in the previous section revealed that fear and uncertainty was a strong challenge for many participants. As no participants indicated that they intended to leave the profession because of this challenge, Lent et al. proposed that these men must have strong supports. Participant data indicated that their abilities to cope with this challenge and persist within the teaching profession were influenced by the level of coping efficacy they possessed, the coping strategies they used, and the support they received. These findings align with SCCT.

5.4.1 Coping Efficacy

Coping efficacy, or coping with challenges self-efficacy, can be considered as an individuals' beliefs regarding their capabilities to negotiate particular environmental challenges (Lent et al., 2000). This definition suggested that male primary teachers would be better able to deal with the fear and uncertainty they experienced in relation to physical contact if they had high levels of coping efficacy. Coping efficacy can moderate an individual's perceptions of the challenges they face (Lent et al., 2005), and is influenced by successful previous experiences (use of strategies to deal with challenges) as well as how the individual perceived the supports they had available to them.

Participant data were related to coping efficacy through an interpretive process as the coping efficacy of participants was not directly measured during this study, and no survey or interview participant volunteered this term during their responses. Despite this, participants did speak at length about their ability to cope with the fear and uncertainty they experienced in relation to physical contact, and regularly inferred their high level of coping efficacy in relation to this challenge. Participants used terms such as “I just deal with it”, and “I just take it in my stride”, and specifically talked about several of the sources of efficacy beliefs that Bandura (1977) identified. It appeared that the most important sources of coping efficacy for participants in this study were personal performance accomplishments and vicarious learning. These sources could be considered interrelated as once a participant had observed a mentor using a successful strategy; they then used this strategy themselves. Therefore, participants’ positive efficacy beliefs came from both their observation of the strategy being used successfully, and their subsequent successful use of the strategy themselves. Both these sources positively influenced participants’ coping efficacy by constructively affecting their perceptions of their ability to deal with the fear and uncertainty they experienced in relation to physical contact.

Along with successful personal experiences, the presence of social supports has been identified as an important contributor to an individual’s coping efficacy (Lent, et al., 2000). Participants in this study indicated that they received support from their family and friends, and perhaps more importantly from within their school communities. All interview participants, and numerous survey participants specifically referred to the support they received from either their school leaders or teaching colleagues; and often both. Again participants did not specifically link the

support they received to their coping efficacy, yet it was clear that knowing they could rely on their colleagues and leaders for support and understanding was an important aspect of their ability to cope with the fear and uncertainty they experienced in relation to physical contact. The existence of these supports was a strong positive influence on participants' assessment of, and efficacy for enacting their coping strategies for this challenge.

5.4.2 Coping Strategies

Participants shared numerous strategies they used to cope with the fear and uncertainty they experienced in relation to physical contact. These strategies included both the use and avoidance of physical contact. Strategies varied from asking for permission and using high fives through to using humour and moving to public places to have one on one conversations with students. SCCT (Lent et al., 1994) did not include information on discerning between good and bad, or functional and dysfunctional coping strategies. Therefore, participant strategies were compared to more general coping literature (e.g., Carver, 1997; Carver & Connor Smith, 2010) in order to determine their functionality. This additional layer of analysis was included to add depth to this discussion, in parallel to my analysis using SCCT. Participant coping strategies will now be discussed.

Challenging Stereotypes

A small minority of participants stated that despite the possibility of being subjected to double standards and false accusations, they would continue to make physical contact with their students. These participants believed that making physical contact with their students was a part of their job:

> If a child needs caring I do try to show that nurturing, and that's important. The challenge has always been the physical contact with kids, but earlier on I thought that there is a purpose in me being a bloke in an early childhood classroom and that is to show that men can be caring as well. So despite the Steve Randalls and Rolf Harris' [convicted paedophiles] of the world, if a child needs me to physically touch them then I'll do that because that is part of the role. If they come to me and lean up against and I don't push away because they are doing that for a reason. If the female next door can put an arm around a crying kid and I can't well I think there is a message there that is not a good one for the child to receive (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014)
>
> I certainly don't want children thinking that only females can give them a hug (Harry, Interview 2, November 2014).

These comments demonstrate that there are male primary teachers who think it is appropriate for men to hug an upset young student. The men making these comments are clearly concerned about the message avoiding physical contact sends to students about appropriate behaviour for male and female teachers, and for men and women more generally. Fred, Harry and others appeared to be resisting the gendered double standards described by participants in this study. Their belief that men should be caring and nurturing like their female colleagues is in opposition to the predominantly fear motivated statements of other participants.

Fred and Harry's comments challenged stereotypes of traditional masculine behaviour and suggest that there are alternative ways for men to interact with their students. These masculine behaviours can include being authoritarian and keeping an emotional distance from others (Mills et al., 2008). Providing father figures and

positive male role models that challenge traditional masculinity is a commonly cited argument for increasing the number of male primary teachers (e.g., Petersen, 2014; White, 2011). Participants such as Fred and Harry were willing to do this, yet most participants indicated that they were not comfortable with this more hands on approach. This was likely to be caused by men who display a more caring masculinity being perceived by society as possibly gay or a paedophile (Bhana & Moosa, 2016; Mills et al., 2004). Challenging traditional gender stereotypes by adopting a more caring and nurturing approach appeared to be very difficult for those men who did not feel they were able to provide children with the same level of physical comfort their female colleagues could without their actions being deemed as suspicious.

Asking for Permission

Other participants in this study indicated that they were willing to make physical contact with their students for teaching demonstrations and student safety, but not hug them. These men had developed several strategies to reduce the risk of this contact being perceived as inappropriate. Some participants stated that their fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact was reduced if they asked the students permission before making contact with them;

> I ask permission if I need physical contact with a student for any reason (Survey respondent 5, August 2013)

> I am very conscious about making any physical contact with students. If I need to make contact to assist with a skill I ensure I ask permission first and am never in a one on one environment with a student (Survey respondent 15, August 2013).

These comments indicated that some participants in this study did not make any physical contact with their students unless they had obtained their permission first. This approach aligns with policy guidelines (e.g., Christian Schools Tasmania, 2015; Government of South Australia, 2011; Northern Territory Government, 2011), and seemed reasonable in a first aid situation where a student should be informed of a teachers' intention to touch the specific body parts required to assess their injury. In other situations such as giving a congratulatory pat on the shoulder asking permission appeared less necessary, yet this is how some participants had interpreted physical contact guidelines. Whether or not permission is required in different situations is highly subjective and likely to change from one context to the next. What is most relevant for this study is that this strategy appeared to have given some participants more confidence in their ability to deal with situations that required physical contact.

Compensatory Activities

Some other participants who were not comfortable hugging their students highlighted their use of "compensatory activities" (Sargent, 2000, p. 425) as an effective strategy for developing relationships with their students without using the same level of physical contact as their female colleagues. Compensatory activities can be defined as low-level non-intrusive physical contact such as high fives;

> I am really into shaking hands and giving them high-fives so that kind of contact helps to develop rapport where they don't feel uncomfortable if I do put my hand on their shoulder. So it sets a precedent of what acceptable physical contact is, and that it is quite normal for boys and girls (James, Interview 1, August 2014)

> Sport is definitely a way that you can bond with children and develop strong relationships because you can connect with them. When I'm on duty at lunch I will go down and kick the footy or shoot basketball and give some high fives for good shots etc. So this gives me an opportunity that other teachers properly don't have (Steve, Interview 1, August 2014).

James' comments indicated that he deliberately used compensatory activities when congratulating students in order to build rapport, but also to create a precedent of what acceptable physical contact looks like in his classroom. James' statement surrounding the inclusion of lower level contact to build rapport with students echoed previous research such as Gosse (2011) and Sargent (2000). Sargent stated that men balanced "the lack of mothering in their classrooms" (p. 427) by including compensatory activities such as high fives and handshakes. Gosse similarly stated that male teachers find "ingenious" (p. 128) ways to nurture their students in lieu of the regular physical contact their female colleagues engaged in. These actions included increased verbal praise and high fives. The low level physical contact James utilised appeared to be an important part of him building rapport with his students without needing to replicate the more caring and nurturing approach used by his female colleagues.

Steve and other participants made specific comments about playing sports in break times to develop stronger relationships with their students. These lunchtime activities could also be seen as compensatory behaviours, similar to those mentioned by James. Skelton (2011) stated that men who interact with their students in this way are emphasising hegemonic masculinities in order to establish themselves as "properly male" (p. 12) in their female dominated work environments, and reduce the possibility of accusations of child sexual abuse and questions about their sexuality.

The behaviours of participants such as Steve might have been working against the deconstruction of prevailing gender stereotypes that view sport as a masculine pursuit (Martino, 2008), yet participants stated that their primary intention in these situations was to build rapport with their students. Despite the potentially wider implications of their behaviour that Skelton refers to, the use of compensatory activities to develop relationships with students appeared to be a successful coping strategy for participants in this study.

This use of compensatory activities might have been a successful strategy for some participants in this study because their use reduced the need for more intrusive, potentially more risky physical contact such as hugging. This strategy was of great benefit to some participants, but others voiced a preference to keep physical contact to an absolute minimum. These male primary teachers had therefore developed various non-physical strategies so that they could avoid making physical contact with their students whenever possible.

Self-protection

The gendered double standards, societal expectations, and perceptions described previously have promoted a culture of conscious self-protection amongst many of the participants in this study. Numerous participants indicated that they had developed a predominantly non-contact approach primarily because they were very fearful of being accused of making inappropriate physical contact with their students. This fear and resultant self-protection mindset has been noted by previous research (e.g., Bullough, 2015; Ashcraft & Sevier, 2006) on male primary teachers. Participants such as Fenton described this mindset;

> The connection I am making looking over my responses to your questions in the first interview is that the thread tying all my responses together is a fear of, being not necessarily accused but just carrying around this constant sense of if I let my guard down something could happen that is going to just ruin me. I probably didn't realise before but it really does just colour every situation and everything I do at every point of the day in the classroom (Fenton, Interview 2, November 2014).

Fenton's comments display how his awareness of having to constantly protect himself had influenced every action and interaction in his working day. One of the participants in Burn and Pratt-Adams' (2015) study similarly described this awareness as a "cloud" (p. 127) that constantly hung over him. The fear that Fenton and other male primary teachers described was likely to have been extremely debilitating and noticeably influenced their teaching. The considerable time and effort Fenton and other participants used protecting themselves and avoiding any potentially risky situations would have been time consuming and potentially reduced their capability to do their jobs to the best of their abilities. These men therefore required strategies that utilised the assistance of other members of the school community.

Help from Female Colleagues and Other Students

Participants described how they asked other students, as well as their female colleagues to help them in situations where an upset student in need of assistance that required physical contact approached them;

> I usually ask a student's friends to comfort them if they are upset or crying. They can give them a hug, take them down to first aid or go and find a female teacher to help. I will only make physical contact if the student is unable to

> walk due to injury. I will carry them down to first aid in this situation (Survey Respondent 28, August 2013),
>
> The only strategy I perceive as adequate for male teachers is to maintain a strictly no physical contact teacher-student relationship. I defer all injured or upset students to a female teacher (Survey Respondent 40, August 2013),
>
> I always refer upset or injured students to a female colleague who can give them the hug that I don't feel I can. As I am the only male teacher on staff there is always a female around and on duty with me at lunchtime (Survey Respondent 41, August 2013).

These statements indicated that some male primary teachers deal with the challenge of physical contact by avoiding it whenever possible. This strategy echoed previous male primary teacher research findings (e.g., Lewis et al., 1999) regarding the avoidance of physical contact. The strategies participants had developed looked to take advantage of female teachers' ability to provide physical comfort to their students. By deferring upset students to their female colleagues, participants were able to facilitate these students receiving the physical comfort they needed without having to personally provide it. The high number of female colleagues these male primary teachers worked with meant that this strategy could likely be used successfully at all times of the school day. This strategy could appear to simply be male laziness, yet many participants who referred to this situation specifically stated that they felt they had to use this deferral strategy for self-protection. Deferring upset students to female colleagues might also be a successful strategy for other male primary teachers who want to comfort their students, but are concerned about protecting themselves from accusations of inappropriate behaviour.

Classroom Setup and Positioning

Teachers and students are constantly in close proximity to each other throughout the school day. In addition to deferring students to female colleagues, participants also detailed other coping strategies they employed to minimise physical contact with their students. These strategies included setting up their classroom and planning how they would move within it in a way that maintained some physical distance between them and their students;

> I don't have any situations where the kids might end up sitting next to me on the floor. So when we do silent reading we sit at tables on chairs. I have a very clear picture in my head of how my room operates. It is instinct after 16 years. I had to learn a few things. I am big, so standing over children at their desks can be intimidating, so I don't do that, I have a conference table where they can bring their work to me and sit opposite me or next to me so we are eye to eye. As a male it has become second nature to do things this way (Fenton, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I am always thinking about how I set up my room and when I'm moving around the classroom where I'm going to stand, especially when I'm talking to the older girls. So maybe crouching next to them rather than leaning over them (James, Interview 1, August 2014).

Fenton's comments indicated that he had set his classroom up in a way that used desks and tables to minimise physical contact with students. One of his early principals telling him that he was physically intimidating and children were frightened of him certainly influenced the inclusion of the conference table; but it had the added benefit of maintaining some physical space between him and his students and also

eliminated the incidental physical contact that could occur as he moved around his classroom. Fenton had set his classroom up to minimise physical contact because he was highly fearful of being accused of making inappropriate physical contact with his students. Fenton had developed this strategy in part because of his physical size, yet he was not the only participant in this study who was reluctant to walk around their classroom and lean over their students to assist them.

James' comments indicate that he also thought a lot about how he set up his classroom and moved within it. James, who is physically smaller than Fenton, does move around his classroom, but he is very aware of what he is doing. Crouching next to, rather than leaning over his older female students might be about coming down to their eye level and making it obvious that he was focussed on their work. Such a consideration might be less necessary in early childhood classes, but could be a very real concern with more physically developed girls in the upper primary grades where James taught. This positioning strategy had been developed primarily through personal experience and was an important contributor to James' ability to move confidently around his classroom. The strategies Fenton and James described could be used by other male primary teachers in similar situations.

Voice

Verbal strategies were mentioned by participants in this study as another way they minimised physical contact with their students. Participants described how they consciously thought about both their words and their tone in situations where physical contact could be required. Most participants who described their use of this strategy referred to situations involving potentially violent, rather than upset students. For example;

> There were two young family guys that modelled the behaviour I have now in terms of my interaction with kids. I learnt a lot about how to deal with certain situations and when to ask for backup. I learnt from them how to use my voice, how your voice can be what gets you out of a potentially violent situation. So that was hugely important (Fenton, Interview 2, November 2014)
>
> If a student is misbehaving or getting aggressive I always try to be clever with my words to get their attention before I have to put my hands on them. I always plan to try to use non-physical strategies first. Having plans in place is important (James, Interview 1, August 2014).

Observing these successful strategies modelled by more experienced male primary teachers, and subsequently having success when he incorporated them into his own approach appeared to be a key part of how Fenton coped with potentially violent situations without using physical contact. In contrast to Fenton's tone related comments, James' remarks were more to do with what he said. It appeared that James tried to divert the attention of a potentially violent student before he injured himself or others. His preference for non-physical interventions is in line with policies discussed previously (e.g., Government of Western Australia, 2011) that specifically stated that physical interventions should only be used as a last resort. James' statement also revealed that he intentionally planned his use of verbal strategies in advance. Thinking ahead and planning the strategies they could use appeared to give James and other participants more confidence in their ability to successfully cope with potentially violent situations. The successful use of these planned non-physical coping strategies was an important factor in reducing participants fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact.

Humour

The use of humour is another non-physical coping strategy that teachers can employ. Numerous participants in this study talked about their use of humour as a non-physical strategy to build relationships with students, to defuse potentially risky situations, and avoid having to make physical contact with their students. Fenton stated that a lot of what he does was "masked with a healthy dose of humour" as he had found that this was an effective way to rebuff a child seeking physical contact without hurting their feelings;

> Recently on music camp some of the kids would come up and say "can I have a hug before bed" and I was like "no go away" again this was done with a bit of a laugh like "no you're all horrible stay away from me, you smell, personal space, germs"; all of that because I don't want to say to them no I don't want you to come near me because it might be misinterpreted. I use the jokes to let them know that I am interested in them, rather than just being blunt and gruff and telling them that is not appropriate (Fenton, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I think I do use humour in a lot of different ways such as building relationships with students and giving some tongue in cheek input to a student argument that I think might get aggressive and require me to physically intervene. In the upper grades in particular I think you can cut through a few things a lot quicker with a bit of humour (Steve, Interview 2, November 2014).

These comments suggest that the use of humour is an important strategy for both building relationships with students, and dealing with potentially difficult physical situations in a sensitive manner. This sentiment links to previous research (e.g.,

Skelton, 2011; Cushman, 2010) that noted male primary teachers often bring a heightened sense of humour to their teaching. Fenton's coping strategy for dealing with these situations clearly incorporated a strong self-preservation mentality. He felt he had to rebuff a student seeking a hug because the gendered double standards discussed previously had made him very fearful of being accused of making inappropriate physical contact. Fenton had adopted this non-contact approach because he believed that it was the best way to protect himself, but he was very aware that his approach could affect his ability to build and maintain positive relationships with his students. The use of humour appeared to be a strong contributor to him being able to develop these positive relationships with his students without making physical contact with them.

Steve's statement also made reference to the use of humour to build relationships and avoid physical contact. Similar to James' comments above, it appeared that Steve preferred to initially intervene in a student disagreement with a verbal comment whenever possible. Steve did not specifically state that he consciously planned to do this; but his remarks implied that his use of humour was his preferred strategy in these potentially violent situations. In addition to the use of verbal strategies that Steve and other participants described, participants also talked more generally about the importance of them thinking about and planning for any potentially risky future situations.

Thinking Ahead

Thinking ahead might not seem like a coping strategy in the truest definition of the word, yet the number of participants that made reference to it warrant its inclusion. In addition to thinking ahead in terms of setting their classrooms up and

planning to use non-physical interventions as their first option, participant comments also revealed that they consciously thought about how their actions could be misconstrued and actively planned to minimise potentially dangerous situations;

> I try to have a bit of foresight into how things could be construed. So be a bit proactive in looking after yourself and also the child because you don't want a child in a situation where they were doing something inappropriate or making you feel uncomfortable, probably without even realising it (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I try and plan ahead so I know what's going to happen and I can avoid those [physical contact] sorts of situations. So if I have a child who has been misbehaving or I might need to restrain, planning ahead is a big thing from me to ensure that if I do have to be physical there is someone else there to witness how it is done. Possibly relocating them or making sure they are isolated before the incident so no one has to touch him at all. (James, Interview 1, August 2014).

Fred's comments indicate that he was aware that he needed to protect both himself and his students from any potentially risky situations. This strategy aligns with what Aspinwall and Taylor (1997) term proactive coping. Proactive coping involves acting before any dangerous situations arise in order to prevent them occurring. Fred's belief that students might not even realise the inappropriateness of their actions suggested that these children might not have yet developed an understanding of the gendered double standards prevalent in society and might therefore assume that all teachers are equal and unknowingly put their male teacher in an uncomfortable situation. Fred's

comments highlight the potential risks faced by male primary teachers in relation to accusations of inappropriate behaviour.

James' comments also refer to the self-protection mindset and gendered double standards mentioned previously. It appeared that James' forward planning was motivated in part by a belief that he needed colleagues present to witness any physical contact he made as they could then corroborate his story in the event of an accusation. His strategies therefore relied heavily on the support of his female colleagues and reinforced how important these colleagues were in helping male primary teachers cope with their fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact.

Protected by Glass

Female colleagues were also mentioned in relation to another coping strategy participants used to deal with their fear and uncertainty regarding accusations of inappropriate behaviour. Participants believed they could circumvent some of the potentially negative perceptions of others if these people could see what they were doing at all times. Some participants specifically commented that having classrooms with a lot of large windows that allowed others to observe their teaching made them feel a lot safer:

> When I first started here my classroom was away from all the others. We had our own bathroom and I remember walking in and thinking I can't teach here, I am isolated, who is going to see what I'm doing? I had to pester the school to get a door that had a glass window to replace the solid door of my classroom had. It took a while for them to say yes and when I moved into another block I had to do the same thing. Both times it happened I had a female principal and

> it seemed to them like an odd request to them (Fenton, Interview 2, November 2014)
>
> I like the fact that I have windows all-around and anyone can walk past and look in and know exactly what's going on (Fred, Interview 2, November 2014).

What Fred described, and what Fenton desired was a feeling of being 'protected by glass'. These comments revealed that they believed that people would be less worried about what they were doing in their classrooms if these people knew they could just look through the window whenever they wanted to. Fenton's comments indicated that his principal did not understand why he wanted the glass he was requesting in his classroom. His female principal would not have personally experienced the influence of societal perceptions of male primary teachers and therefore not have realised how they affected her male staff. Alternatively, she might have been very aware of the power of societal perceptions but respected and trusted all her staff and therefore had no problem with any of her teachers being alone in their classroom with their students. Regardless of the support Fenton might have experienced from his principal, he still felt the effect of societal perceptions and having more glass around his classroom was an important influence on his ability to cope with this challenge.

Moving to a More Public Location

If more glass was not an option because of physical space or financial reasons, moving to a more public location where they had an adult witness was the predominant strategy participants used to reduce the difficulties associated with unplanned interactions with individual students in the classrooms at break times;

> If a student comes into the room at lunch and wants to talk then we will go down to the library and have a chat there. The kids think you just want to go down to the library but what you are actually doing is going down to the library because Mrs X is there and she can look over your shoulder (Fenton, Interview 2, November 2014)
>
> I'm very conscious of a child coming in to the classroom by themselves, particularly girls. In that situation I would try to minimise the amount of time they spent in here. I would either leave the room or give them some excuse. If it is something that involves some degree of intimacy I may well take them outside. Even some of the little ones who have trouble getting their jumper off and you have to hold their shirt down for them. So you just make sure you're doing it in front of other people. Generally, if I can get myself in a situation where I have a female witness on hand then I will try to do that. I have a female colleague next door, so if I was ever in here with a child the first thing I would do would be to open up the door between our rooms so she could see and I would situate myself somewhere where she could easily see what I was doing (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014)
>
> I never allow myself to remain in a room with only one child, if a child needs to remain inside because of illness I have doors open and sit in the doorway with a female teacher nearby and aware I have a child remaining in the room (Survey Respondent 20, August 2013).

These comments reveal that men actively avoid situations that require them to make physical contact with a student when no witnesses are present. This finding echoed participants' statements for previous research such as Ashcraft and Sevier (2006).

Participants' strategies in these situations prioritised removing the student from the classroom as quickly as possible in a manner that is sensitive to the students' feelings. This avoidance is likely to be connected to the previous stated self-preservation mentality as no witnesses means no support or corroboration of their story in the event of an accusation. These responses again highlight how important the support of female colleagues was to participants' abilities to enact the strategies they used to cope with fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact.

5.4.3 Supports

Many participants in this study made mention of the support they had received within their schools. Along with the strategies discussed above, this support was a key contributor to their ability to cope with the fear and uncertainty they experienced in relation to physical contact, and remain within the primary teaching profession. This finding aligns with one of the key assumption of SCCT; that people are more likely to implement career choices such as persisting within their profession if they perceive and experience strong supports for their choices (Lent, 2012). Lent et al. (2000) also stated that perceptions of these supports are a key predictor of career outcomes such as retention. Participant comments primarily focussed on the support they received from their female colleagues and school leaders, but other participants made specific mention of other members of the school community, such as parents and students.

Female Colleagues and School Leaders

Numerous participants in this study stated that support from their female colleagues and school leaders was a vital aspect of their ability to cope with the fear and uncertainty they experienced in relation to physical contact. These statements echoed previous research (e.g., Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012; Cooney & Bittner,

2001; Smith, 2008) that indicated the importance of these relationships. In addition to their important roles in the strategies discussed above, participants stated that this support included discussing concerns and seeking advice through to direct assistance when required;

> I have had some extraordinary support from female staff. I have been lucky here as I have a female colleague directly across the hallway so I just have to open the door walk over and say "I need you to help me with this" (Fenton, Interview 2, November 2014)

> I know the principal would bend over backwards to make sure I was happy and wanted to stay which is good. She has been happy to come and take my class for short periods when I had to deal with a sensitive issue immediately, which was very helpful (James, Interview 2, November 2014).

These comments demonstrated that support from female colleagues and school leaders can come in many different forms and in many different contexts. Colleagues and leaders would likely offer support regardless of gender, yet participants in this study clearly appreciated that they could quickly access support from their female colleagues and school leaders if they required it. This was particularly important for situations in which they were fearful or uncertain about making physical contact.

In addition to support and direct assistance from female colleagues and school leaders, participants also talked about how they valued being able to share their concerns so that others were aware of potential problems. Participants in this study described the importance of informing colleagues as soon as possible if they ever suspected there was the potential for an issue to arise with a student;

> I will get in as early as possible and go to a supervisor to make it really clear that this is the situation, this is what's happened, and this is how I'm responding (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I think you just need to make sure you are sharing that information with other teachers. Informing others shares that responsibility and other people are aware that this is going on so there is any recourse then you have other professionals to back you up (Steve, Interview 2, November 2014).

These comments revealed that making other colleagues aware of situations in which they were fearful or uncertain was an important coping strategy for some male primary teachers. The strategies revealed in these comments display similarities to other strategies mentioned by participants such as moving to a public place to deal with a student one on one so that other colleagues can see what is happening. Making colleagues aware of potential problems was unlikely to be a male only strategy, yet it was highly valued by participants that experienced fear and uncertainty about physical contact. This support was particularly influential because of the gendered double standards prevalent in society, and the likelihood that these men might not have other men to talk to about these issues within their schools.

Support from school leaders can also come through informing male teachers when parents have requested their children be in their class and keeping requests for children not to be particular classes to themselves.

> I know in some cases there have been parents who have said "we want him in with Fred because he needs a male figure in his life." And I have at times had kids directed my way because they are in a female only house and there is no

> male presence. There may well be that parents request to not have me but you don't hear that (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014).

These and other similar comments indicated that some parents did specifically request their children have a male teacher. Some men would rather know about all requests and the reasons parents have given for not wanting their children in the class of a male teacher, yet the withholding of this information by school leaders could positively influence the self-efficacy of male primary teachers. This improved self-efficacy might be as a result of feeling that they have the trust and support of school parents and were seen as the equal of their female colleagues. Male primary teachers might be less fearful and uncertain about making physical contact with their students if they felt that parents trusted them to assess the educational and social value of doing so.

Building Trust and Rapport

Many participants in this study mentioned the building of relationships with parents and students as being vital to their ability to cope with the fear and uncertainty they experienced in relation to physical contact. The importance of male primary teachers gaining acceptance from the parents of their students has been noted by previous research on male primary teachers (e.g., Mills et al., 2008; Thornton & Bricheno, 2008). It appeared that participants believed that the development of this trust and rapport would make them less vulnerable to false accusations of inappropriate behaviour and ensure that their school community viewed them as different to the high profile paedophiles seen in the media.

Despite many participants stating that they just ignored the media, others worried that their reputations would be tarnished by the inappropriate actions of other

men. In order to combat this, men described how building trust and rapport within their school and the wider school community reduced the difficulty of this challenge. For example;

> The greatest 'weapon' a male teacher can employ is confidence and competence. Once a track record of competence is established it is no longer an issue. Parents, mums in particular, want to know that you care and that you can empathize. Some need regular reassurance, given in little doses (a note in the homework book, a chat at the gate) others just like to test you and once you have passed the test, you are accepted (Survey respondent 12, August 2013)

> I always go out of my way to get to know parents and build a rapport. Kids at my school feel intimidated by a loud "bloke" as my voice and nature can be overwhelming. So I get to know the kids first and foremost and then the parents (Survey respondent 45, August 2013).

As participants were unable to change societal perceptions of male primary teachers themselves, it appeared that the strategy many had adopted was to try to improve these perceptions within their own schools. This strategy has been reported in previous research on male primary teachers (e.g., Foster & Newman, 2005). These comments indicated that male primary teachers deliberately made the effort to build rapport with parents, and that they believed that this would make their job easier long term. This also appeared to be a more useful and successful strategy than simply ignoring the media. These findings suggest that the building of trust and rapport is vital to the success and persistence of male primary teachers. If parents and other stakeholders felt they knew male teachers well, these men were then given greater

trust and acceptance. This trust and acceptance allowed them to take a more hands on approach to teaching and reduced the risk of their reputation being adversely affected by the inappropriate behaviour of other men.

The contrast between participants' willingness to make physical contact with their students might be related to the amount of trust and acceptance they perceived to have from the parents of their students. Participants such as Fred and Harry were happy to challenge gender stereotypes and make physical contact with their students. This poses the question of why they were willing and able to ignore gendered double standards and incorporate physical contact into their teaching approaches when other men were not. The answer to this question is likely to have many complexities, but Fred and Harry do have obvious similarities. They are both older men who are well established in their present schools after many years of teaching experience. The trust and rapport they had developed within their school community over time might have contributed to them feeling that their behaviour was less scrutinised and that they could adopt a more hands on approach similar to their female colleagues. If this were indeed the case, it would be a similar situation to one noted by Foster and Newman (2005). One of their participants noted that he was gradually able to change his teaching approach as he gained the acceptance and trust of parents. This perceived trust eventually enabled him to approach physical contact in the same hands on way his female colleagues did. This participant was very aware that this acceptance would disappear if he changed schools and had to start again with a new set of parents.

Parents' perceptions of teachers and their work can be considered a microcosm of societal views more generally (Commonwealth of Australia, 1998). If parents see male primary teachers working hard and doing their jobs well it might improve their

opinions of these men and gradually start to positively influence the perceptions of male primary teachers in society more generally. Until this has occurred male primary teachers will have to use other coping strategies for dealing with negative media perceptions and the resultant fear and uncertainty they experience surrounding physical contact.

5.4.4 Functional Versus Dysfunctional Coping Strategies

When the strategies presented above were compared with the strategies summarised by the Brief COPE (Carver, 1997), it appeared that participants in this study predominantly used functional coping strategies. Participant data contained evidence of both successful problem focused and emotion focused strategies. Examples of problem focused strategies used by participants included moving to a more public location and using their voice to their advantage. Emotion focused examples included the use of humour and seeking support and understanding from their colleagues.

Participant responses also provided some evidence of potentially dysfunctional coping strategies such as avoidance. Avoidance is not a standalone strategy in the Brief COPE, but Carver and Connor-Smith (2010) do specifically refer to avoidance as a disengagement coping strategy. They stated that disengagement coping strategies are generally ineffective over the long term, as they do nothing about a challenges existence or eventual impact. Najmi and Wegner (2008) also stated that avoidance could increase thoughts about a challenge and negatively affect mood and anxiety. Fenton's comments about his fear and uncertainty regarding physical contact colouring "every situation and everything I do at every point of the day in the classroom" indicated that Najmi and Wegner's comments might be accurate for some

male primary teachers. Classifying the subsequent avoidance of physical contact by Fenton and other participants as dysfunctional could be considered a little harsh when all the complex intricacies of the male primary teacher experience discussed previously are considered. Participant data indicated that adopting a teaching approach that avoided or limited physical contact to a bare minimum was a successful coping strategy for some male primary teachers. Admittedly, as Carver and Connor-Smith (2010) stated, this strategy did not remove the fear and uncertainty participants experienced in relation to physical contact, but it did enable them to cope with this challenge and persist within the profession.

Societal perceptions and gendered double standards were an influential contributor to participants' fear and uncertainty in relation to physical contact. In light of these substantial factors, participant's avoidance of physical contact can be easily understood. As participants could not individually change societal perceptions of male primary teachers as a whole, many of them had decided that their best strategy was to be the best teacher they could be in order to try and improve these perceptions within their own school communities. Until the unlikely day comes that gendered double standards become non-existent and male and female primary teachers are viewed equally, male primary teachers might feel that they have to employ a similar strategy. This strategy should not be considered participants denying the existence of the challenge, but rather acknowledging its entirety and attempting to make a positive impact as an individual. If, as indicated by many participants in this study, being the best teacher they could be involved the avoidance of physical contact; then this is what some male primary teachers will have to do. Avoidance could be classified as a dysfunctional coping strategy, yet the avoidance of physical contact appeared to be a

highly functional coping strategy for some participants in this study. Participant data indicated that this strategy was a very positive influence on their coping efficacy for dealing with the fear and uncertainty associated with physical contact.

5.4.5 Conclusion

In this section I revealed how participants in this study were able to cope with the fear and uncertainty they experienced in relation to physical contact. Some coping strategies such as avoidance could be classified as dysfunctional, but with societal perceptions and gendered double standards as they are, these strategies are understandable and effective. In addition to the use of effective coping strategies, participant coping abilities were influenced by the level of coping efficacy they possessed, and the support they received. These findings align with the key premises of SCCT (Lent et al., 1994). All of these influences interrelate and it is difficult, and likely unnecessary to determine which is the most important. What is important is that these three influences seemed to work together to assist the participants in this study cope with the fear and uncertainty they face in relation to physical contact. The identification of these coping strategies might also be able to assist other male primary teachers struggling to deal with this challenge. The implications of this and other findings are discussed in the next section of this chapter.

5.5 Part D: Implications

In this section I explore the implications of the findings of the previous three sections for male primary teachers into the future. These findings include the existence of gendered double standards and different perceptions of how male and female teachers should interact with their students. Male primary teachers should be able to expect the same treatment and respect as their female colleagues, but this did not appear to be the reality for many participants in this study. Despite research (e.g., Cushman, 2005a; Skelton, 2009; Szwed, 2010) finding that male primary teachers, like their female colleagues, were primarily motivated by wanting to make a positive difference in their students' lives, participant data indicated that they believed they were perceived quite differently by society. This belief echoed previous research on male primary teachers such as that of Wood (2012), who encountered participants who believed their actions and behaviours were subjected to more suspicion and scrutiny than their female colleagues. These gendered double standards had resulted in participants experiencing considerable fear and uncertainty about making physical contact with their students.

5.5.1 Clearer Guidelines

Participant perceptions of when and where it was appropriate for them to make physical contact with their students were largely in line with policy documents. Despite this consistency many of these documents were vague and lacked the depth of information required by male primary teachers who were fearful and uncertain in relation to physical contact. This lack of depth was particularly the case for the Tasmanian guidelines (Christian Schools Tasmania, 2015; Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission, 2007) that directed the behaviour of the majority of

participants in this study. Some examples of missing information included where on the body a teacher could make contact when physically restraining a violent student, and whether or not it was appropriate to hug an upset child. Organisations such as the Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission and Christian Schools Tasmania might need to provide clearer and more comprehensive physical contact guidelines to their teachers that include specific directions of appropriate behaviour in common situations, such as those involving first aid, physical restraint and upset students. This increased guidance could allow male teachers in particular to be more confident in their actions and result in their students receiving the care and assistance they require in a timely manner. Schools could also be encouraged to share these guidelines prior to the start of each school year in order to keep them fresh in their teachers' minds and reduce confusion in the wider school community about what is and is not appropriate teacher behaviour.

Alternatively, the existence of a more detailed set of guidelines might be problematic and actually perpetuate and reinforce the gendered double standards discussed previously. These guidelines would be gender neutral and written for all teachers, yet the reality of societal expectations and perceptions being what they are is that they might make the experiences of male primary teachers even harder. Female teachers are likely to continue making the same amount of physical contact they currently do whereas their male colleagues would likely feel that they had to strictly follow all guidelines. Guidelines might reduce some of the uncertainty surrounding when and where male primary teachers could make physical contact with their students, but they would not reduce their fear. Male primary teachers who continue to be fearful of being accused of making inappropriate physical contact with their

students might decide that not making any physical contact with their students is the best way to cope with this challenge and consequently protect themselves from false accusations of sexual abuse.

5.5.2 Coping Efficacy

Coping efficacy might moderate an individual's perceptions of the challenges they face (Lent et al., 2001; 2005). Participant data indicated that high levels of coping efficacy positively influenced their ability to cope with the gender related challenges they experienced and persist within their profession. Successful previous experiences, vicarious learning and presence of social supports influenced participants' coping efficacy. Therefore it is vital that male primary teachers are able to access these experiences and support in order to assist them in coping with the fear and uncertainty they experience in relation to physical contact.

Male primary teachers need to be able to access mentors and observe the strategies that these successful and experienced teachers use to cope with situations involving physical contact. These successful coping strategies can then be incorporated into the teaching approaches of other less experienced male primary teachers and positively influence their coping efficacy for this challenge. Participants in this study stated that they had learnt a lot from experienced female colleagues, yet many participants specifically stated that learning from a male mentor had been of most benefit to them in situations involving physical contact. This added benefit appeared to have occurred because these male mentors had personally experienced the gendered double standards and societal perceptions that participants had experienced. This personal experience meant that these mentors could suggest, and model, practical coping strategies that were specific to the fear and uncertainty participants described.

If schools do not have experienced male staff that can mentor younger male teachers they might need to make available the time and or money required to facilitate this occurence. This could involve male teachers attending conferences and building local male teacher support networks, and also the employment of retired male primary teachers to act as mentors.

In addition to providing the support of a mentor, data from this study suggested the support of their female colleagues and school leaders were strong positive influences on participants' coping efficacy. School leaders need to be aware of the importance of their support to their teachers, particularly male teachers dealing with situations involving physical contact. Male teachers need to be proactive in developing positive relationships with their school leaders and female colleagues; nonetheless school leaders can facilitate this by the creation and promotion of a supportive staff environment. School leaders should be aware of the fear and uncertainty their male teachers can experience in relation to physical contact, but specifically sharing this challenge with all staff has the potential to create a bigger issue. Fenton stated;

> It [his fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact] is not something you can just take to a staff meeting because once you introduce something like that people wonder why you want to talk about it. It is the unspoken that nobody wants to talk about but for blokes it is always there (Fenton, Interview 2, November 2014).

Fenton's statement indicated that he felt his fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact was an uncomfortable discussion topic and he therefore did not want to make a big deal out of it. His comments are consistent with the findings of Burn and Pratt-

Adams (2015) who noted that this challenge was very powerful because it remained unspoken but widely understood. Participant data indicated that they did not really want to discuss this challenge with their colleagues, they just needed to know that they had their support when required.

School leaders need to be aware of the gendered double standards and perceptions of male primary teachers in society. Similar to some of the coping strategies discussed previously, school leaders need to acknowledge the existence of these double standards and perceptions in society, and take action within their own schools. School leaders cannot change these societal perceptions and double standards themselves, but they can create and promote a supportive school environment that does not perpetuate them. This environment could increase male primary teachers' perceptions of support, and positively influence their level of coping efficacy. This might reduce the fear and uncertainty male primary teachers experience in relation to physical contact, and make them more confident to make physical contact when they believe it is required to provide care and support to their students.

5.5.3 Reinforcing Versus Challenging Traditional Male Behaviour

According to Sargent (2000) male primary teachers have three options regarding their approach to the physical contact challenge. The first option was to reject the expectation that teachers should be caring and nurturing, and just focus on the subject matter. The second option was to adopt the same hands on approach as their female colleagues, and the third option was to acknowledge their inability to risk replicating the actions of their female colleagues and perform compensatory behaviours instead. All three of these choices were represented in the coping strategies of participants in this study, yet option two was far less common. Those

men who had predominantly chosen the first or third of Sargent's (2000) options seemed to have done so primarily because they feared being falsely accused of sexually abusing a student. The decision to adopt a non-contact approach rather than risk a career ending accusation was entirely understandable, but it would be disappointing in light of arguments for more men in primary schools. Providing father figures and positive male role models that challenge traditional masculine behaviours is a commonly cited argument for increasing the number of male primary teachers (e.g., Cushman 2008, White, 2011). Deconstructing stereotypes by adopting a more caring and nurturing approach appeared to be very difficult for those men who do not feel they are able to provide children with the same level of physical comfort their female colleagues could. If male teachers feel their actions and approaches are constrained by the fear and uncertainty caused by gendered double standards and societal perceptions, this will greatly inhibit their ability to fulfil the lofty goals of challenging traditional gender stereotypes that researchers such as those described by White and Cushman.

The fear and uncertainty participants experienced in relation to physical contact had necessitated the development of numerous coping strategies, as described above. The strategies participants described had proved successful for participants and allowed them to persist in the profession, yet many of these strategies might have also worked to reinforce the hegemony of traditional forms of masculine behaviour (Mills et al., 2004). Coping strategies such as the avoidance of physical contact might have allowed participants to cope with their fear and uncertainty in relation to this challenge, yet these actions might have also been educating their students about appropriate behaviour for different genders. This avoidance could have reinforced the

gendered double standards discussed previously in that physical contact is permissible for women, but not for men. If young children receive the message that only females can be caring and nurturing, this is likely to perpetuate this perception in society for future generations.

Some participants in this study indicated their intent to challenge the gendered double standards they experienced and interact with their students in the same ways their female colleagues did. In order for more men to feel confident that they can choose the second of Sargent's (2000) options, the fear and uncertainty male primary teachers experience surrounding physical contact and false accusations needs to be reduced. Collaboration between schools, society, and the media is required in order to achieve this. Organisations (e.g., Education Queensland, 2002) have previously suggested the establishment of a support framework for teachers who are falsely accused of sexual misconduct, yet these strategies have devoted inadequate time and energy to challenge the societal attitudes that create this fear surrounding false accusations.

Men who choose to teach in the younger grades are consistently positioned as abnormal or deviant, and consequently seen as possibly gay or a paedophile (Bhana & Moosa, 2016; Mills et al., 2004). At the same time calls for more men in primary schools continue (e.g., Carrington, et al., 2007, Martin & Marsh, 2005). It appears difficult for these two scenarios to co-exist in a harmonious manner. Many of policies designed to encourage more men into teaching are unlikely to change society's perceptions of male primary teachers. Consequently male primary teachers struggle with being simultaneously positioned as both valuable and suspicious. Participants in this study indicated that they were greatly affected by this paradox and the resultant

shroud of scrutiny they experienced. These contradictory positions raise questions about whether the calls for more men in primary schools are realistic within the current culture of gendered double standards evident within both schools, and wider society. In the meantime male primary teachers will have to continue to work hard to positively influence the perceptions of key stakeholders in their school communities.

Chapter 6

Expectations to Take on Masculine Roles

6.1 Introduction

Teachers are increasingly expected to perform more complex and diverse roles as a part of their job (Galton & MacBeath, 2010). The continual diversification of teachers work affects both genders, yet male primary teachers have reported higher workloads than their female colleagues because of expectations for them to take on additional roles within their schools. These roles can include manual labour (Cushman 2005b), dealing with discipline issues (Mills et al., 2008), coaching sports teams (Smith, 2008), and being responsible for subjects such as science and computing (Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015). Skelton (2009, p. 42) described these additional responsibilities as “masculine roles” and noted that they were often assigned to men.

Workload was identified in the quantitative survey data as one of the major gender related challenges faced by participants in this study. However, there was tension between the quantitative and qualitative data in relation to this challenge.

Qualitative data from open-ended survey questions and semi-structured interviews indicated that workload was indeed a challenge, but that it was not gender related. Participants stated that all teachers were busy, and that their contracts specified that they must do a certain number of extra-curricular hours for their school. The gender related challenge they actually faced was related to role expectations and distributions. Workload was an implication of these gendered role expectations, differentiations and allocations.

In this chapter I will examine the 'masculine' roles participants in this study were expected to perform. Other potential challenges related to power structures and professional relationships within schools will also be discussed to present a more complete picture of participants' experiences of working in female-dominated schools. This examination will include the coping strategies participants' use, the support they perceived they have, and the level of coping efficacy they possess. Finally, the implications of these findings will be discussed.

6.2 Expectations to Take on Masculine Roles

Previous literature has identified numerous additional masculine roles expected of male primary teachers (Smith, 2008). Survey and interview participants in this study perceived an expectation for them to perform masculine roles such as dealing with discipline issues, manual labour and coaching sports teams within their schools. In this section, I will analyse and unpack these roles and the strategies participants use to cope with expectations to perform them. I will also discuss contributing factors such as power structures and hierarchies in schools, and how schools perpetuate the contested constructions of gender and masculinity prevalent in wider society.

6.2.1 Dealing with Discipline

An expectation to deal with disciplinary problems is a common experience for male primary teachers (Mills et al., 2008; Skelton 2009). This expectation was the most commonly cited additional role by participants in this study. Numerous participants noted that they were expected to sort out behaviour problems, particularly with boys:

> I am the school disciplinarian. With some of the harder kids in school it's a case of send them over to Harry he will sort them out sort of attitude that has been adopted in some of the classes (Harry, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I know that being a male teacher at this school, there are certain elements that it has become an unspoken understanding that I will sort out. For example one is behaviour (James, Interview 1, August 2014)

> The closer relationships I have developed by having a kick of the footy at lunch with the older boys allows me to be more assertive and direct with these students when they misbehave, so they are usually sent to me (Survey Respondent 19, August 2013)

> I have been directly told that I have to deal with behaviour problems because "men are better at that" however I think there are female teachers at school that are much better at this than me (Survey Respondent 24, August 2013)

> When senior staff are in meetings it is common for other teachers to send misbehaving kids to me. This happens fairly regularly and is very annoying as it interrupts my class, or release time. There are more experienced female teachers at the school but it seems that they get sent to me because I am a man

> and so it is accepted that I can be a bit more direct when telling them off (Survey Respondent 43, August 2013).

These comments reiterated previous research on male primary teachers (e.g., Mills et al., 2008; Smith, 2008) in relation to men being expected to deal with behaviour management. Participants in this study clearly attributed, and were sometimes directly told that the expectation to take on this role was related to their gender. Cushman's (2005b) participants similarly stated that they were repeatedly and irrationally assigned behaviour management responsibilities when there were females in their schools who were more experienced, and better at disciplining children. Participant statements indicated that these expectations are still a reality for some male primary teachers in their current schools.

Other participants stated that some of the reasons they believed they had been given the disciplinarian role was due to their firmer body presence and deeper voice, shared interests, and ability to use tough love. These men perceived that they could be more direct with behaviour management and did not have to adopt a softer, more negotiation-based approach predominantly used by their female colleagues. Focussing on this perceived advantage appeared to be a key aspect of these participants being able to handle situations quickly when they arose. Positively reframing a situation is a functional emotion focused coping strategy (Carver, 1997). Despite being considered functional, positive reframing does not actually reduce the time requirements of this role.

The expectation that survey participants in this study would deal with discipline issues had become a major difficulty for some of them because it took up a large amount of their time. The time taken to perform this additional role stopped

them from devoting adequate time to other parts of their job such as planning. This situation was clearly a point of frustration for some participants:

> I certainly find that I do not use my release time effectively because most of the time I'm just dealing with kids and behaviour and I'm not using it to do anything else. I do not think this is a problem for other female teachers here (James, Interview 1, August 2014)

> Behaviour problems are sent to me. This is manageable when it is infrequent however we have some increasingly difficult year groups coming through the school and I don't think this is sustainable as I will not have time for anything else (Survey Respondent 46, August 2013)

> I am forever dealing with behaviour issues at lunch and in my breaks whereas my female colleague across the hall can use these time to plan and mark and socialise. This means I often have to stay later than everyone else after school has finished so I can get these things done (Survey Respondent 52, August 2013).

These statements illustrate how role allocation has impacted on the workload of participants in this study. These experiences are consistent with earlier research from Sargent (2000) who noted that being assigned all the discipline problems can make for difficult working conditions. If male primary teachers are unable to use their release time for other important aspects of their job such as planning, it is very possible that they find themselves working late after school or on the weekend to complete these tasks and maintain a professional standard. Timms, Graham and Cottrell (2007) noted that teachers in this position often suffered from fatigue and were less likely to persist in the profession. Several participants questioned the

sustainability of their approach if they had to deal with rising numbers of behaviour issues, but none stated that they were thinking about leaving the profession because of this challenge. Rather, participants detailed the coping strategies and supports that allowed them to deal with this additional role and remain in the profession. These strategies and supports will now be discussed.

Strategies and Supports

The identification of strategies and supports is vital in light of Lent (2012) noting that people are more likely to persist in their profession if they experience strong contextual supports. The coping strategies participants described were aimed at using their time more effectively so that they could cope when additional behaviour issues arose. The main coping strategy participants described to efficiently complete the other aspects of their job was to arrive at school early each day:

> I'm keen to get to school early and am here by about 7:00 each day. I find that very constructive time because there's no one else here and that is probably worth two hours of after-school time because I don't get interrupted (Survey Respondent 10, August 2013)

> I have found getting to school early is a good idea as there is no one else around. There are no kids and therefore no behaviour issues, so I actually have time to plan and mark students' work without being disturbed (Survey Respondent 17, August 2013).

Several survey respondents mentioned a commitment to arriving early at school and the uninterrupted time this strategy resulted in. Arriving early is not a gender specific strategy, yet the efficient use of this valuable unbroken planning time was an

important coping strategy for these men. Arriving early could be considered active coping, which is enacted when a person takes deliberate actions to try and improve their situation. Active coping is a functional problem focused coping strategy (Carver, 1997) as it incorporates a direct effort to deal with the challenge being faced. This strategy could be utilised by other male primary teachers if their lifestyles allow it.

In addition to arriving early, participants mentioned other functional coping strategies aimed at saving time. Another active coping strategy used by participants was the recycling of lessons they had used in previous years:

> I have been teaching for a while now so I know my stuff and can get away with not planning much if I am too busy dealing with behaviour issues (Survey Respondent 24, August 2013)

> My planning does suffer because of this lack of time [due to dealing with behaviour issues], but I am able to cope through modifying lessons from previous years (Survey Respondent 32, August 2013).

The strategy of reusing old lessons to reduce planning time is unsurprising, however it is not an option for new teachers as they might not have any previous lessons to use. These less experienced male teachers might not have expectations surrounding behaviour management, yet previous research has found that they often do (Mills et al., 2008). These less experienced male teachers might need additional support within their schools to manage these expectations.

School leaders can provide additional support for teachers dealing with expectations to perform additional roles within their schools. Several participants in this study indicated that their principals did support them in their role as school

disciplinarian. This support came in the form of increased teacher aid time for their classes and their principal teaching their class for short periods of time so they could deal with an issue:

> My principal supports me when she can. She is always willing to come and take my class for ten minutes or so when I have to go and deal with a behaviour issue (James, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I get allocated more teacher aides than other classes because I am always dealing with behaviour. I can get these aides to do photocopying and get resources together for me if required. This saves me a lot of time (Survey Respondent 2, August 2013)

> My principal will come and take my class at a moment's notice if I have to deal with a behaviour issue. She also makes sure I get more aide time. This is handy when she has to take my class and the aide can tell her what the students are doing (Survey Respondent 14, August 2013).

Participants did not state whether or not the behaviour issues were from their own class or from other classes. Others (e.g., Cushman 2005b; Sargent, 2000) have noted that male primary teachers might be allocated classes with more behaviour problems. Fred and Survey Respondent 19 stated that they had heard of male colleagues facing similar circumstances, yet no participants directly stated that they had experienced this gendered differentiation themselves.

Support from their principals seemed to be an integral factor to participants ability to cope with the additional responsibilities that being the school disciplinarian involved. Participants asking for, and receiving support from their principals is a form

of instrumental support. Instrumental support involves people receiving help from others, and is a functional problem focused coping strategy (Carver, 1997). This support appeared to be an important contributor to male primary teachers' abilities to cope with an expectation to perform masculine roles such as being the school disciplinarian.

6.2.2 Fix and Carry

Male primary teachers expected to be the school disciplinarian can also be expected to take on other responsibilities within their schools. Previous research (e.g., West, 2004) has stated that another masculine role male primary teachers are expected to perform is to assist their female colleagues with jobs involving manual labour. Numerous participants identified this expectation and that requests to fix, move and carry things could take up a lot of their time:

> Being a male teacher at this school, I am expected to sort out things that may need a bit of ingenuity or muscle power, such as sorting out all the seats and music stands for singing practice (James, Interview 1, August 2014)

> A female colleague has called me from the other end of the school to come and help move desks and bookcases. I would have passed the classrooms of at least 10 physically capable female teachers to get there. When I asked why I was told "because it is a man job" (Survey Respondent 7, August 2013)

> Apparently we know how to fix things, carry things, and resolve things that are too difficult for female teachers. This can rob me of valuable time (Survey Respondent 13, August 2013)

> I do a lot of planning at home now because I was constantly interrupted after school by female colleagues wanting help to move furniture or fix their computers or other things men are expected to be better at (Survey Respondent 42, August 2013).

These comments revealed that some participants worked with female colleagues who had a very traditional understanding of gendered roles. This finding has been noted by previous researchers (e.g., Cushman, 2005b; Lewis et al., 1999; West, 2004) and is an example of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity can be understood as a representation of what men should be and do (Connell & Masserschmidt, 2005). The influence of this societal construction within schools indicated that these schools were perpetuating the traditional gendered roles and expectations prevalent in society. This situation is unsurprising given that schools can be considered a microcosm of the communities in which they operate. Of relevance to this study, is that this scenario can make for more difficult working conditions for those men who have few, or no other men to share these masculine roles with.

Short of asking other teachers and or the groundsman to help with heavy items, the participants in this study did not present strategies for dealing with an expectation to assist their female colleagues fix and carry things. The interruptions alluded to in the earlier comments regarding the strategy of coming to school early might also apply to this expectation, yet these participants did not specifically mention manual labour. This situation could suggest that fixing and carrying things was not a major challenge for most men in this study. Alternatively, participants might have accepted that this was part of their role as a man within their schools and preferred to help when required rather than challenge the gendered thinking of their

female colleagues. Either way, participants stated that they generally acquiesced and did what needed to be done as quickly as possible. Accepting the reality of a situation and learning to live with it is a functional emotion focused coping strategy (Carver, 1997). This additional expectation appeared manageable for most participants in this study, however it seemed that, similar to the findings of Lewis et al. (1999), this was dependent on several factors. These factors included the number of men in the school that could share these jobs, and the amount of other additional expectations men had placed on them.

6.2.3 Coaching Sports Teams and Teaching 'Masculine' Subjects

Male teachers are expected to perform additional roles such as sports coaching and responsibility for "masculine" (Skelton, 2009, p. 42) subjects such as science and ICT. Male primary teachers are often expected to be involved in coaching school sports teams after school and on weekends (Smith, 2008). The difficulty of this expectation was increased if one male teacher was expected to take numerous male dominated sports such as cricket and football, whereas his female colleagues could share female dominated sports such as netball. Numerous survey participants cited an expectation to take on a role in school sport was an inherent part of their job as male primary school teachers. Most schools in which participants taught had a specialist health and physical education teacher, but these specialists were usually part-time. Therefore roles such as coaching school sports teams had to be done by other teachers:

> With sport it is always expected that I will know what is going on and that I can sort it out. We do have a PE teacher but generally questions get fired at me first as he is not here all the time (James, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I do rostered sport such as cricket and football for the boys. I do the swimming which is a year program, about eight weeks a term, camps and then the odd other class for example this afternoon I have mapping (Steve, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I coach an after school cricket team in summer and a football team in winter every year. Some female teachers also coach hockey, netball teams etc, but because there are more of them they only do one, or sometimes no sports a year. I like sport so I don't mind this, but I wish all females had to devote a similar number of hours to doing something else for the school (Survey Respondent 38, August 2013)

> It has certainly been my experience that female teachers do not have the same expectations in terms of coaching sports teams after school. Some do other things, but overall I seem to be a lot busier after school than they are (Survey Respondent 39, August 2013).

These participant experiences are mirrored in the findings of Mills et al. (2008) and Smith (2008), who noted similar sports related expectations for male primary teachers. Expectations around sport have the potential to pose a challenge for those men who feel pressured by their schools but are not interested in, or good at sports. Despite this possibility, participants predominantly mentioned expectations surrounding sport positively. For these men, sport seemed to be viewed as an expectation that they had accepted, and were happy to meet. For this reason, participants did not detail any strategies for coping with a school expectation to take on sports related roles. Several participants specifically mentioned their perception that their female colleagues spent less time performing sports related roles for their

schools. Principals who expect their male teachers to perform additional roles such as sports coaching might have to delegate additional roles and responsibilities to other teachers in order to ensure equal workloads.

Male primary teachers are often expected to be responsible for masculine subjects such as science and ICT (Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015). Participants indicated that this role can require these men to make decisions regarding choice of textbooks, run professional learning sessions and answer ongoing questions from other staff. Fenton and Fred were amongst the participants in this study who mentioned this expectation:

> Subjects we [his female colleague and him] have always tended to split; I've done the science and she has always done geography or history. I'm quite happy doing history and geography but I would say that certainly here I have noticed that science is not something that other [female] teachers are particularly strong with or willing to leap into. I would say that on the staff if there was anyone that had a science question they would come to one of the male staff. For many years I was also the ICT teacher here. So yes I would say there are definitely male and female subjects (Fenton, Interview 1, August 2014)

> We don't have subject leaders here we just all do our own thing, but in previous schools I've ended up with the science or maths job so there probably is a certain amount of that of “he’s a bloke so he is better at that” (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014).

Similar to sport, the creation of these “male-dominated niches” (Martino, 2008, p. 292) within schools might have indicated that men are willing to take on these roles to

comply with traditional notions of what a “real man” (Mills et al., 2008, p. 71) is interested in and should be knowledgeable about. This situation suggests that schools embrace traditional gendered beliefs, and men are also willing to embrace these hegemonic constructions of masculinity. Participants seemed to have accepted this role within their schools and did not detail any strategies for coping with this expectation. Carver (1997) described acceptance as a functional emotion focused coping strategy. This strategy might be adequate for those male teachers that enjoy roles related to sport and specific subjects, yet it does not directly reduce the time required to perform these roles. Male primary teachers struggling with the expectation to perform ‘masculine’ roles related to sports and subjects might require additional support from leaders and colleagues within their schools.

6.2.4 Conclusion

Participants in this study indicated that an expectation to perform masculine roles was one of the major gender related challenges they faced in their profession. This challenge was strongly contributed to by schools perpetuating traditional gendered roles and hegemonic constructions of masculinity. Despite the time requirements of these roles, participants largely appeared willing to perform them. Participants wanting to conform to traditional hegemonic constructions of masculinity might have influenced this compliance. Alternatively, some participants stated that they enjoyed roles such as sports coaching and saw great value in them for students. These findings indicated that factors such as school support influenced male primary teachers’ experiences of performing masculine roles within their schools.

The school environment teachers work in can effect their perceptions of the roles and responsibilities they are expected to perform. Incongruence was evident

when examining participants' perceptions of why they had been allocated specific roles within their schools. The preceding sections provide evidence of participants who perceived they had been assigned additional roles because of their gender. Other participants believed roles were allocated for other reasons:

> Everyone does extra; I don't see workload as being such a gender thing. If a science job needs handing out sometimes it has come my way because I am seen to have some background in science/maths stuff relating to my previous role as a secondary science teacher so it is fairly easy for me. I see that as just another part of my job (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014)

> The school became part of the Schools for Positive Behaviour Support System the year I started here and I was asked to head that. I have had previous experience in other roles and responsibilities that sort of indirectly meant that I had to do those kinds of things. So I don't think the decision was made solely on gender. Similarly with singing practice, it is usually the grade 5/6s who are responsible for running things so there is an element of "because I have that class I'll do it". I suppose all teachers here have a fairly equal load in regards to those extra responsibilities. We are supposed to share organising the religious education but that has fallen on the shoulders of two other female teachers so there is a little bit of that (James, Interview 1, August 2014)

> For me the sport was not really a challenge but certainly a role that I took on straight away. I have possibly been picked for those extra roles because things like cricket and football I guess I fall naturally into those roles as I like sport and like to see kids being active. I don't think I've been selected to any of those positions over anyone else because I'm a male. With some of the boys

> who might need a bit of discipline, all teachers here obviously have good discipline, but it is just that firmer body presence, deeper voice and being able to go out and play those games means I can connect at a deeper level which I think makes it a bit easier for me as I can be more direct (Steve, Interview 2, November 2014).

These comments indicated that these interview participants believed they had been given particular roles because of their personal interests and abilities, rather than because of their gender. This finding conflicts with previous research (e.g., Smith, 2008) that noted men being allocated specific roles because of their gender. Participant data indicated that these men understood the logic of delegating roles to staff with strengths in those areas and a willingness to engage with them. It is important to note that these findings indicate that interview participants did not perceive they were assigned roles because of their gender, but their principals were not asked if this was actually the case. Regardless of whether or not principals considered factors such as gender when allocating these roles, the resultant allocations might still be socialising students to appropriate gendered roles in the way that previous researchers (e.g., Skelton, 2011) have noted.

Male primary teachers might have been willing to perform masculine roles to reduce the likelihood of considerable future work and stress in attempting to defend themselves from accusations of not being a "real man" (Mills et al., 2008, p. 71). Despite the fact that involvement in additional roles such as sports coaching can put men in potentially risky situations such as physically assisting with technique and supervising change rooms (Cushman, 2005b), interview participants indicated that they were still willing to take on such masculine roles. It is conceivable that these

men interpreted not conforming to traditional notions of how a ‘real man’ should act to be a far greater risk. This decision indicates a critical dilemma, where male primary teachers might find themselves in the uncomfortable situation of having to choose between the lesser of two potentially negative situations.

Male primary teachers need coping strategies and supports in order to deal with expectations to perform masculine roles within their schools. Participants did appear to have adequate functional coping strategies to deal with these expectations, and remain in the primary teaching profession. Strategies such as arriving at school early and recycling lessons were primarily focussed on efficient scheduling so that they were able to cope when roles such as behaviour management required more of their time. Other strategies such as acceptance and positive reframing can be considered functional (Carver, 1997) yet they do not actually reduce workload. Participants seemed to have accepted these roles as part of their workload, but some resented that their female colleagues were not also expected to take on additional roles and responsibilities. Therefore there is potential for these expectations to become a challenge for male primary teachers who do not believe their female colleagues are assigned equivalent roles. Ensuring fair and equitable workloads for all staff should therefore be a priority for school leaders who expect their male primary teachers to take on additional masculine roles.

6.3 School Power Structures and Professional Relationships

Examining expectations for male primary teachers to perform masculine roles has revealed some other potential challenges related to power structures and

professional relationships within schools. It appeared that the relationships interview participants had with their school leaders and female colleagues did affect the difficulty of these expectations, particularly if they were negative. These negative relationships did not necessarily increase the roles and responsibilities of interview participants, but the stress and difficulty they caused could result in increasingly difficult working conditions that took considerable time and effort to safely navigate. This navigation had the potential to be harder and more stressful for interview participants than performing the masculine roles discussed previously. Working conditions being adversely affected by negative relationships with superiors and colleagues is likely to be a common workplace problem, yet the unique situation created by lone or minority male primary teachers traversing the politics of a female dominated school warrants further investigation.

6.3.1 School Leaders

Strong support of male primary teachers by their principals has been previously discussed in the literature (e.g., Cushman, 2008), and is likely to be a critical factor in male primary teachers perceptions of the gender related challenges they face. It appeared that the men interviewed within this study held a shared perception that their school leaders played a vitally important role for male teachers dealing with expectations to perform masculine roles. All five interview participants had female principals, but their perspectives could be clearly divided into those who felt supported by their school leadership (Fred, James and Steve) and those who did not (Fenton and Harry):

> I think it [his perceptions of support] comes down to the management and I've generally had good management (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I know the principal would bend over backwards to make sure I was happy and wanted to stay which is good. It is quite soul satisfying to know that there is that support (James, Interview 2, November 2014)

> Everyone is busy. I don't think I end up with a higher workload than my [female] colleagues because of my sports coaching and other extracurricular activities. The principals are very supportive and quite conscious of making sure everybody does an equal amount (Steve, Interview 1, August 2014).

Fred, James and Steve felt well supported by their principals and believed they were mindful of ensuring all staff were expected to perform roles additional to their teaching. These men did perform masculine roles, but trusted their principals to ensure equity through the allocation of other roles and responsibilities to their female colleagues. This support appeared to be a positive influence on the participants' perceptions of these additional roles, as they knew they could access assistance if required.

Support from school leaders has been previously identified (e.g., Kane & Mallon, 2006) as an important contributor to teachers' ability to cope with their increasing responsibilities. Unfortunately Fenton and Harry did not feel they had the support of their principals:

> At no point in my career have I ever felt less supported by school leadership than I do right now. These leaders are the ones that stand up at the start of the school year and talk about how we are all one big community and how we have to support each other, and then they don't support their teachers (Fenton, Interview 2, November 2014)

> My principal does not support me in relation to things like my medical condition. She disagrees with my medical advice and has written me 10-15 letters in the last 18 months about my condition wanting more information and my doctor has said “you don't have the right to any more information, I have told you all you need to know”, but she keeps harassing me to get more information. So I do not feel supported (Harry, Interview 1, August 2014).

Neither Fenton nor Harry stated that their principals deliberately gave them more additional roles or responsibilities than their colleagues, yet the actions of, and lack of support given, by their principals undoubtedly influenced how they did their jobs. Unsurprisingly, the hypocrisy related to this lack of support appeared to have negatively affected their perceptions of, and relationships with, their school leaders.

Expectations to take on additional roles and responsibilities create part of the complex social context that exists in schools, but there are also other challenges relating to different roles within schools. As the schools union representative, Harry felt that he had to make a stand about issues on behalf of other staff. This increased the difficulty and stress of his job through countless meetings and discussions with his colleagues:

> Everyone is nice and friendly here but when it comes to standing up and being counted they go missing and I think that is because they are afraid of the principal. I have spoken to a number of people and they have said that they are in fear of what might happen to them. So that maybe another gender difference that men don't seem to be quite as concerned about that [negative repercussions from school leaders] and are prepared to push harder and stand up and look at fairness and justice and equity as the key principles. So we are prepared to take a hit for things and for other people too. This can take a lot of

> time and negotiating and I do sometimes wonder if all the work and stress is worth it seeing I have such little support [from his colleagues]. At the moment I'm trying to get all the staff in grade 5 and 6 to negotiate with her [his principal]. We're not required to go on camp, we volunteer to go on camp. So if we go then let's talk about give and take that's what I'm trying to promote here. But they keep saying "it's not fair on the kids" and so I've had to say "this has nothing to do with the kids it's about our working conditions". Trying to get females to differentiate those issues is really hard. They tend to get really maternalistic even though there is a precedent here of the agreement we had with the past principal. So I'm not going to go on camp unless we sit down and have a meeting because there is just no give-and-take here. She [the principal] gets us to do a lot of stuff and there is no appreciation for what you do. I think a lot of other female teachers can see this cultural change but again they're not prepared to do anything about it. So what they are doing is creating more crosses for teachers in the future to carry because they haven't stood up now (Harry, Interview 1, August 2014).

Throughout these comments Harry described his perception and experience that his female colleagues were much less likely to take a stand in support of issues such as additional roles and responsibilities. The fact that Harry was committed to holding the principal accountable to negotiate with teachers about what was best for all involved had negatively affected his relationship with her, and also increased the difficulty and stress of his job. Intrinsic to professional relationships within schools are the power structures and forever-existing tensions about who is in charge and who is not. His principal might have interpreted what Harry saw as a negotiation as a direct threat to

her leadership and judgement. Regardless of how his principal interpreted his actions, Harry's comments indicated that those teachers who perform roles that involve potential conflict with school leaders could find themselves with more difficult and stressful working conditions.

The possible serious health consequences of work related stress for teachers in Australian non-government schools has been noted previously (Timms et al., 2007), and was touted as a critical contributing factor as to why teachers leave the profession. The lack of public support he received from his fearful colleagues had resulted in a lot of stress for Harry, which had led to a medical condition. Thankfully Harry had enacted several coping strategies that had positively influenced his ability to persist in the profession. Harry's primary strategies for dealing with this condition were to modify his work practices. Consequently Harry has only worked four days a week for the past two years. Previous researchers (e.g., Naylor & Malcolmson, 2001) have noted teachers moving from full time to part time work to cope with difficult working conditions. Working part time is not a gender specific strategy, yet it did allow Harry to cope with the gender related challenge he faced. His actions are an example of active coping (Carver, 1997). This functional problem focused coping strategy, combined with not volunteering for extra roles and committees, had proved effective for Harry in managing both his condition and the expectation to take on additional roles and responsibilities. It could also prove effective for other stressed and overworked teachers if their financial circumstances allow.

A lack of support from school leaders can both increase and decrease different aspects of male primary teachers' work. Fenton and Harry described how the lack of

support from their current principals had actually resulted in less extra-curricular responsibilities:

> I have withdrawn from the greater school environment and retreat to the safety of my grade level team who I trust. This has meant that I just focus on my teaching and I no longer do after school activities such as robotics that I have done for many years under previous principals (Fenton, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I gave my time freely and willingly then [under his previous principal] for two reasons, one because I was starting out but also because not that I wanted thanks but I thought that I would have got some appreciation for giving those extra yards. But with the change of principal she couldn't give a shit about your history at the school. She [the principal] is only interested in things that have happened since she started, which is crazy. She gets us to do a lot of stuff and there is no appreciation for what you do. She says that if you do 100 things then you must get 100 things right. But I think that's bullshit so now I just do fewer things. I might do 10 things and try to get 9 1/2 right (Harry, Interview 2, November 2014).

Fenton and Harry had coped with their current working environment by reducing the extra roles they performed for their schools. They focussed primarily on their teaching and were less interested in volunteering their time to take on additional roles. Their actions align with previous research (e.g., Fink, 2003; Sonnentag, 2005) that suggested teachers might adapt to their increasingly difficult jobs by disengaging from aspects of their work and refusing extracurricular tasks. Harry, in particular, seemed to be reacting to a perceived lack of appreciation for the extra roles he had

performed. He might have consequently felt undervalued and reacted in a way that meant he still had some control of his situation. These participants have provided another example of how male primary teachers can use a gender non-specific strategy to cope with a gender related challenge. Fenton and Fred's actions are another example of active coping (Carver, 1997) as they involve taking direct action to improve their work situation. This strategy could be used by other male primary teachers if their working conditions allow.

Researchers have previously suggested that male principals are more supportive of their male teachers (e.g., Cushman, 2008). Despite Fenton and Harry's recent experiences, the gender of their school principal did not appear to be a major factor of influence for interview participants in this study. The fact that neither Fenton nor Harry negatively referred to the gender of their female principals, and Fenton had been happy under a previous female principal at the same school, suggested the possibility that a clash of personalities might have been a further contributing factor. Characteristics such as being consistent, fair, appreciative and supportive are more person specific than they are gender specific. Harry and Fenton's comments suggest that the experiences of all teachers are influenced by the characteristics of their principal, and that this influence is distinct to any perceived gender preference. The abilities of male primary teachers, and indeed all teachers, to cope with the challenges they face are likely to highly dependent on their relationship with, and support from their school leaders.

Since conducting these interviews, Fenton and Harry have decided it was best for everyone involved if they moved schools. Both men stated that they loved working with children in the classroom and would definitely not stop teaching, but

they recognised the need for a fresh start within the profession. Those men, and women, unwilling or unable to move schools might need to relinquish roles that involve potential conflict with school leaders or develop strong relationships with some of their female colleagues whom they can then rely on for support.

6.3.2 Female Colleagues

Male primary teachers have previously reported both positive and negative working relationships with their female colleagues (e.g., Cushman, 2005b; Smith, 2008). Interview participants similarly reported positive interactions with some, but not all of their female colleagues. Fenton and Harry both stated that some of these negative interactions occurred when female colleagues were unwilling to utilise approaches that had proved successful for them. Fenton detailed a behaviour management example:

> I have had particular success with boys labelled as 'difficult' and made headway where female staff have not. Perhaps it is the schools I have taught in, but female staff tend to take it as a personal affront when you, as a male, make headway where they did not. At this point these teachers then feel the need to tell you that your success is because you pander to them or you let them get away with something/do what they want. I find this very difficult to understand. What they really mean to say is "wow, I didn't manage to get through to that student, but you have.'" Unfortunately, in my experiences, particularly in the past 9 months, they [some female teachers] don't learn from your example, or model your success, but instead try to bend the child to their will and when that doesn't work it is once again because the child is the problem; and then I generally have to come in and clean up the mess. One

> recent example was when a female colleague ignored a behaviour plan I developed with a difficult student, his parents, and a psychologist. Many months later I am still experiencing the repercussions of her actions and having to work hard to rebuild the boy's trust. There is a failure to be able to accept that they [some of his female colleagues] might be wrong in their approach. As a male teacher, I will take ideas on board from colleagues I respect, especially if it will help me interact with a student. I have found too many of my female colleagues don't work this way. If I have success, it's because of a fundamental flaw in my approach that has allowed the student to gain an upper hand, whereas they see their failure to connect with a child as the child's problem (Fenton, Interview 1, August 2014).

Fenton's comments indicated he was clearly frustrated by his colleagues' behaviour. His remarks suggested that some of his female colleagues were not open to the possibility that they could learn from their male colleagues. Fenton was not overly bothered that women did not ask him for advice or take on his successful strategies, yet he resented the fact that this could often lead to more work for him. One option for men in this position could be to suggest to the principals that they allocate a portion of staff meetings for teachers to share their recent successes. Adopting a more openly collaborative approach where the teachers invited their colleagues to share their approaches to managing particular behaviours might help them feel less threatened by successes and failures. For example, the sharing of tips and techniques for dealing with difficult boys at a staff meeting might persuade other staff to also start using them (Postholm, 2008). Despite men such as Fenton having encountered women unwilling to do this, it is important to recognise that female teachers at other

schools might be accepting of such assistance if it is delivered in a non-confrontational and collaborative situation such as a staff meeting. A collaborative sharing of behaviour management strategies might reduce the escalation of issues by encouraging colleagues to embrace rationales for behaviour management. Such an approach has the potential to ultimately lead to less stress and difficulty for those teachers who find themselves responsible for school discipline.

In addition to the sharing of successful approaches amongst colleagues, male primary teachers are likely to need other strategies to encourage positive working relationships with their school leaders and female colleagues. One strategy interview participants mentioned involved the substantial effort they took when sending emails:

> I tend to put things [alternative suggestions to others' opinions] into e-mails and then reread it; because I have been caught out by people saying "I don't like the tone of your e-mail". I now write something then leave it and come back to it the next day and reread it and make sure it has no emotional language and nothing that can be misinterpreted and no hint of possible sarcasm. This is what I now do because now I can say this is a record of the conversation, this is what we both said. I have to think a lot harder about what should be a simple part of my job, so that does take a lot more time, but I think it is worth it. It is perfect for when you get a grumpy colleague or parent and you can just produce the evidence of what we both said. I have lost count of the number of times that has defused something because they can't argue with it. Not doing this would cost me a lot more time later dealing with passive aggressive issues related to things being misinterpreted (Fenton, Interview 1, August 2014)

> Yes I must admit that if I'm sending an e-mail I really have to put some work into it. I don't know if that's gender related or not but I really make sure that it is correct and good as opposed to just a quick note; I do put the effort in there. I've had examples of where e-mails have been misconstrued so I take the time so that it does not lead to more issues (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014).

These comments revealed that Fenton and Fred were prepared to spend more time on their emails because they believe it would actually save them considerable time and stress in the future dealing with backlash from a misunderstanding. Writing neutral emails is professional practice for teachers of both genders and is unlikely to be a male only strategy. Nonetheless, several interview participants stated that they preferred to email colleagues because they had been accused of bullying and aggression when having professional disagreements with female colleagues in the past. Fenton in particular noted that this strategy allowed him to keep a detailed record of the conversation that could be produced if required at a later date. This strategy has an element of self-protection. Similar to the self-protective strategies noted by participants and research (e.g., Ashcraft & Sevier, 2006; Bullough, 2015) in the previous chapter, this approach was an important contributor to Fenton and Fred's efficacy for navigating the intricacies of the female dominated schools in which they worked. It could also prove effective for other male primary teachers when having professional discussions and disagreements with their colleagues.

6.4 Coping Efficacy

As with the previous chapter, qualitative data were related to coping efficacy through an interpretive process. Participants indicated that they had adequate coping efficacy to deal with the expectations to perform masculine roles and persist within

the primary teaching profession. Interview participants talked about this challenge a lot less than their uncertainty surrounding physical contact. It can be inferred from this reduced data volume that these expectations were a less difficult challenge for them to deal with. Consequently, interview participants identified less coping strategies and frequently used phrases such as "I've become accustomed to it" in relation to these expectations. Participants' efficacy for coping with this challenge seemed to have been positively influenced by several of the sources of efficacy beliefs described by Bandura (1977).

Personal performance accomplishments appeared to be the most important of Bandura's (1977) sources of efficacy beliefs for helping participants in this study deal with expectations to perform masculine roles. Interview participants were all experienced teachers who had adapted to deal with these expectations. Successfully using strategies such as arriving early and recycling lessons appeared to have improved participants' perceptions of these expectations and their efficacy for dealing with them.

In addition to personal performance accomplishments, interview participants also provided evidence of Bandura's (1977) other sources. Fenton described how he had learnt successful strategies from mentors:

> I have learnt a lot of my current strategies in terms of my interaction with kids from previous, more experienced male colleagues. Particularly as the first two of these were in boarding houses where we were putting kids to bed and waking them up and I learnt a lot about how to deal with certain situations and when to ask for backup. I learnt from them how to use my voice, how your voice can be what gets you out of a situation. A couple of times these guys did

> call me aside and talk to me about my body language and told me that they didn't think I'd handled that situation that well and suggested I try a different strategy. So that was hugely important. I am now in the situation where younger male staff members are asking me for advice, so it is nice to be able pass on some of these strategies that have worked for me (Fenton, Interview 2, November 2014).

Observing strategies being used, and then successfully using them himself had been a positive influence on Fenton's efficacy for dealing with additional 'masculine' roles such as behaviour management. After benefitting from the advice of mentors early in his career, he had now willingly moved into the role of mentor for some less experienced male teachers at his school. Voluntarily performing this additional role might have been motivated by a wish to help these young men in the same way his mentors had helped him early in his career. It is also possible that seeing the strategies he suggested prove effective for other men could have positively influenced his own coping efficacy. The knowledge that he had developed effective coping strategies, and had developed into an effective mentor was likely to have been a strong motivator for him to continue in the profession. The way Fenton described these interactions made it clear he felt a sense of pride in being able to help other men in this way. This mentoring could have then increased his confidence that he could cope with the challenges he faced, and that he could make a positive difference through helping his colleagues overcome these challenges.

As described previously, positive relationships with teaching colleagues, particularly female, can be an important influence on male primary teachers' efficacy for coping with expectations to perform masculine roles. Positive relationships can

greatly reduce this challenge by removing the time and stress involved in dealing with conflicts and rectifying misunderstandings. Knowing they had the support of their colleagues, and also school leaders, was a strong contributor to some participants' efficacy for dealing with their ever-increasing roles and responsibilities. This finding suggests that professional relationships with school leaders and colleagues are an influential factor in male primary teachers' abilities to cope with expectations to perform masculine roles in their schools.

6.5 Conclusion and Implications

The increased quantity and diversity of teachers work has been noted in previous research (e.g., Galton & MacBeath, 2010; Foley & Murphy, 2015). Participants in this study noted that they were expected to fulfil numerous additional 'masculine' roles in their schools. These additional roles included handling discipline issues and coaching sports teams. Mills et al. (2008) noted that males have left the primary teaching profession because they were unable to cope with these expectations. Despite the findings of this and other studies, participants in this study appeared to be able to cope with these additional roles. Participants detailed a range of coping strategies and gave the impression, as evidenced through descriptions of situations and their actions therein, that they had adequate efficacy to cope with these expectations. As with the previous chapter concerning physical contact, these strategies appeared to have been primarily influenced by personal experiences and modelling.

Quantitative and qualitative data both indicated participants in this study were expected to perform additional 'masculine roles'. Despite this congruence, there was tension between data sources in terms of whether or not the higher workload these

roles resulted in was gender related. The qualitative data supported this notion that participants had higher workloads because of these additional roles, but also noted that the workload of all teachers had increased due to an intensification of the work demands of the profession. This finding created contradictions between the quantitative and qualitative data and could be considered as disconfirming evidence for previous research (e.g., Smith, 2008), that has indicated workload was a gender related challenge for male primary teachers. These tensions could be somewhat explained if the survey question regarding workload had been poorly worded or omitted a reference to gender. A closer inspection of this item revealed that this was partially the case and can therefore be considered a limitation of the survey instrument. The wording of the survey item was: "Dealing with workload issues due to expectations to fulfil additional roles such as coaching sports teams, handling discipline issues and assisting with physical jobs, attending camps and excursions". The item included several 'masculine roles' as examples but any references to gender are only implied. The item did not specifically use the term 'masculine role' or make reference to an increased workload because of gender. For future use of this survey within MMR I would recommend altering this item to: "Dealing with workload issues due to expectations for men to perform additional 'masculine roles' such as coaching sports teams, handling discipline issues and assisting with physical jobs". This change might help to reduce inconsistencies between different research phases and data collection tools.

Survey limitations aside, survey and interview participants agreed that they were expected to perform 'masculine roles' such as dealing with behaviour issues. This finding reiterates previous research (e.g., Cushman 2005a) that suggests schools

perpetuate traditional gendered beliefs and hegemonic constructions of masculinity. Connell (2002) argued that primary schools have become organisations that have established what she calls a "gender regime" (p. 53). This term indicates that everyday practices in these schools are likely to reinforce a division between acceptable masculine and feminine roles. Schools are agents of socialisation and therefore male primary teachers might be in a position to be agents of change (Cushman, 2010). Not dividing roles along gender lines might help to illuminate children to a greater range of potential futures, yet steps towards these perception shifts could remain challenged if students continue to see men undertaking gender traditional roles such as manual labour and discipline.

Sharing behaviour management responsibilities amongst different staff might be a catalyst for schools not dividing roles and responsibilities along gender lines. This change could give all teachers the opportunity to take on and develop skills across a greater range of roles. Mills et al. (2004) argued that schools need to examine the way teachers' behaviours legitimate and disrupt existing gendered relations of power. This examination should involve male and female teachers working together to challenge the established gender practices and regimes of their schools. Male and female teachers are implicated in upholding gender norms and must therefore both be involved in dismantling them (Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015). Seeing female teachers dealing with behaviour management and men taking on more nurturing responsibilities could give children a broader selection of role models to choose from. This change might also begin to break down traditional gender divides and change children's' perceptions of what is appropriate behaviour for men and women. It could also encourage children of both genders to consider a greater range of potential

futures. This could be a catalyst for challenging traditional hegemonic constructions of masculinity within wider society. A change to societal beliefs surrounding gendered roles is unlikely to occur quickly. In the meantime those male primary teachers who struggle with an increasing workload due to expectations to take on masculine roles might have to enact some of the strategies discussed above.

Looking at the data gathered in this study, expectations to perform 'masculine' roles were a challenge for participants. Their ability to cope with these expectations was positively influenced by the successful use of coping strategies, and support from their female colleagues and school leaders. These findings align with Lent's (2012) statement that strong contextual supports are an important moderating influence on environmental challenges. These positive relationships with colleagues allowed participants to enact coping strategies to deal with expectations such as behaviour management. The support these relationships can provide are a strong contributor to the coping efficacy of male primary teachers, and might also help to reduce the sense of isolation these men can experience as they work in female dominated schools.

Chapter 7

Developing Positive Professional Relationships

7.1 Introduction

Male primary teachers make up a minority of the primary teaching profession, both in Australia and around the world (ABS, 2016; Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013; General Teaching Council for England, 2010). This minority status can result in male primary teachers having few or no male teaching colleagues, and consequently feeling isolated within their schools. Men working in this situation need to develop positive working relationships with their teaching colleagues and school leaders. School leaders can promote a collegial and inclusive workplace in which all their staff feel welcome. Female teaching colleagues can similarly provide support, guidance and advice. The development of positive professional relationships is not necessarily a solely gender based issue, but the experiences described by male teachers in this study

prompted further exploration of issues related to relationships and isolation in this thesis.

As stated in chapter four, social isolation was the third major gender related challenge identified in the descriptive statistics and Rasch modelling of the survey. The survey findings indicated that two thirds of participants rated social isolation as a gender related challenge, with nearly half designating it as a moderate or critical challenge. However, there was tension between the quantitative and qualitative data in relation to this challenge. Some participants specifically stated that they felt socially isolated because they had no other male teachers in their school. These statements aligned with previous research such as Ashcraft and Sevier (2006) who noted that male primary teachers felt a "profound sense of isolation" (p. 131) due to their lack of male colleagues. Yet, open-ended survey question and interview responses also included responses from participants who did not feel isolated in their female dominated schools.

With the quantitative survey results in mind, the lack of supporting data for this challenge was surprising. It is possible that participants perceived isolation as a challenge, but had high coping efficacy and successful coping strategies that meant they were confident they could deal with this challenge (Byars-Winston & Fouad, 2008; Lent et al., 2000). Alternatively, the social isolation some participants perceived might have actually been the result of a larger gender related challenge; namely, the ability to develop positive professional relationships with their teaching colleagues and school leaders. Regardless of their perceptions of isolation, participants indicated that the development of strong professional relationships with their work colleagues was a key gender related challenge for male primary teachers.

In this chapter I will analyse the perceived gender related challenges associated with male primary teachers developing positive professional relationships with their teaching colleagues and school leaders. This analysis will also include an examination of the social isolation that can result from a lack of these positive relationships. I will identify the work related contexts in which participants interacted with their colleagues, and the gender related challenges they perceived in these contexts. I will also examine the coping strategies participants' used to deal with these challenges, the support they perceived they had, and the level of coping efficacy they possessed. Finally, the implications of these findings will be discussed.

7.2 The Challenge of Developing Positive Professional Relationships

The development of positive professional relationships with colleagues and leaders is vital for male primary teachers working in female dominated schools without the support and company of other men. Researchers (e.g., Cushman, 2007; Thornton & Bricheno, 2006) have suggested that male primary teachers have left the profession due perceptions of isolation caused by a lack of these positive relationships. The majority of male primary teachers in studies by Cushman (2005b) and Smith (2008) stated that they generally had positive relationships with their female colleagues, but did miss the familiarity and social aspects of interacting with other men. Some participants in this study made similar comments when describing their current work situations;

> We have a very small staff here and we all seem to get on pretty well, but I still feel pretty lonely. Fridays are good because the [male] physical education teacher is here. It is usually pretty busy for him so it is hard to tie him down

> and have a chat, but if we go on the bus [to sport] together we can have a chat. I try to chat to the groundsman but he only comes in once or twice a week and he works around the school whereas I am teaching. Then he's usually gone when the kids are out and about. So I do feel very isolated as a male (James, Interview 1, August 2014)
>
> It does feel isolating at school when the staff are female-dominated. I find it tough as I am the only male that is there 5 times a week. On 2 days I am the only male on the grounds. I think lack of male contact is a problem for most male primary teachers (Survey Respondent 21, August 2013)
>
> I get on ok with my female colleagues, but I do feel very isolated in my school. I am the only male teacher and do not have much in common with most of my colleagues. This is most obvious in the staffroom at break times (Survey Respondent 33, August 2013).

These quotes indicated that some participants in this study wanted more contact with other men during their working days. James' comments suggest a sense of desperation in the way he pursues these male interactions. His actions might have been influenced by his previous positive experiences of working with male colleagues in schools with a more gender balanced staff. Regardless of James' motivations, he, and other participants in this study indicated that they felt isolated within their schools, despite having generally positive relationships with their teaching colleagues. This finding raised questions about whether issues around isolation were primarily affected by the quality of professional relationships participants had with colleagues in their schools.

The perceptions of James and other participants might have been influenced by the number of male teaching colleagues they had. James had one part time male teaching colleague whereas other interview participants who did not feel isolated, such as Fenton and Harry, had multiple full time male teaching colleagues. As revealed in chapter four, survey participants were more likely to feel socially isolated if they had no male teaching colleagues. This finding is unsurprising; yet further analysis of survey data revealed that perceptions of isolation and number of male colleagues did not directly correlate for all participants. Some participants with few or no male colleagues did not rate isolation as a challenge whereas others with multiple male colleagues did. This finding suggests that participants' perceptions of social isolation were not solely influenced by the number of male colleagues they had. Rather, these perceptions might relate more to the relationships participants had with all their teaching colleagues and school leaders.

Participants' statements did not indicate any feelings of isolation within their classrooms, or when interacting with students or parents. Rather, participants' perceptions of isolation appear to be linked to the professional interactions and relationships they had with their colleagues, particularly female. The statements above identified that the staffroom was one location where these relationships were most evident. The staffroom has been previously identified as a place where male primary teachers feel isolated (e.g., Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Cameron, Moss, & Owen, 1999; Cushman 2005b). Cameron et al. stated that staffrooms were highly gendered and men were generally excluded. The staffroom was the only specific context mentioned by participants in relation to their interactions with their female colleagues. Therefore the focus of this chapter will now turn to examining the factors

that influenced participants' abilities to develop positive relationships with their colleagues in this context.

7.2.1 Staffroom Interactions

Group situations such as lunchtime in the staffroom can exacerbate the minority status of male primary teachers. These situations highlight the ratio disparity between male and female teachers, and made participants in this study very aware of the female dominated nature of their schools. Participants identified social staffroom conversations as a key contributor to the development of personal relationships with other staff in their schools, but indicated they had difficulty interacting with their female colleagues in these situations;

> As a bloke you're in there [the staffroom] with a bunch of women that are talking about stuff that interests them and not you, and you just can't break into a conversation. Alongside that there is the kind of sense of, not being pandered to, but that they try to make the effort to include you in conversation and that can sometimes feel a bit awkward. So yes it can be socially isolating in that way (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I have a little bit of chat but that is still pretty superficial. And they are usually talking about the latest fashions of shoes or something similar and I'm not really interested in that so I don't really have much of a social life here at school, which is pretty miserable sometimes. Sometimes I do think that I need to work somewhere where I have more people with similar interests to me (James, Interview 1, August 2014)

> This [staffroom interaction] is a challenge because quite often you feel isolated within staffrooms etc due to the large number of females, and if you are not willing to listen to female conversations then it can be very difficult. If you've got other males in the school that have got some common interests you can chat about in the staffroom then it's a bit more relaxing. The days that another male [the health and physical education specialist] is in the school are fantastic as you can talk about the footy and discuss "bloke" things (Survey Respondent 1, August 2013).

The statements of these and other participants indicated that their colleagues predominantly spoke about topics that were of more interest to women. Teachers' interests and preferred conversation topics are likely to vary as much within genders as across genders, yet this finding aligns with the findings of previous research on male primary teachers (e.g., Ashcraft & Sevier, 2006; Burns & Pratt-Adams 2015) in relation to staffroom conversation topics. Conversations focussed on female interests were hardly surprising considering most of these colleagues were female, yet this situation provided difficulties for participants hoping to use social chat to develop positive relationships with their female colleagues.

Despite feeling isolated when their female colleagues had conversations on topics of interest to them, participants indicated that they looked forward to when they could talk to their male colleagues about more 'masculine' topics such as sport. This statement reinforced Martino's (2008) view that sport is a masculine interest and an important part of being a "real man" (p. 207). This comment also revealed that some participants had embraced the hegemonic constructions of masculinity that had contributed to the expectations to perform masculine roles that other participants had

complained about in the previous chapter. The rarity of these situations might have caused participants to overlook the hypocrisy of their comments. Participants indicated no awareness that these conversation topics might not be of interest to, and could therefore socially isolate, their female teaching colleagues. Male primary teachers, particularly men such as Fred who have female colleagues that do try to include them in conversation, might need to make more of an effort to develop positive professional relationships with their female colleagues by identifying conversation topics that are of interest to all staff members.

Social isolation caused by a lack of meaningful relationships with his colleagues had caused participants such as James to question their future in their current schools. His statement above appeared quite negative, however James was referring to changing schools rather than occupations. He was clearly unhappy with the social situation at his present school and appeared to be considering a move to another school with a more gender balanced teaching staff. Lent and Brown (2006) stated that environmental supports are an important factor in determining work satisfaction. Participants such as James appeared to view his male colleagues as an important support mechanism and consequently had negative outcome expectations for persisting in his current school without them. Similar situations are likely to be present in most workplaces, yet the unique situation created by men working in a gender non-traditional profession such as primary teaching could make their perceived social isolation even harder to deal with.

In addition to feeling isolated due to difficulty participating in female conversations, participants in this study spoke about their female colleagues making

negative comments about men and making fun of them more often than other female teachers. For example;

> I have also found that females quite often stir up male teachers more than other female teachers, in good humour, however it can make it difficult. For example comments such as "Stop having a man look" (Survey Respondent 1, August 2013)

> I have occasionally been the only male in a large gathering where negative or off colour comments about men have occurred which have made me uncomfortable. I generally just ignore them or laugh along with them [his female colleagues] but it can be annoying (Survey Respondent 20, August 2013)

> I do spend less time in the staffroom these days because I am sick of females having a go at me about the status of male teachers more generally. Although I know these comments are usually meant to be humorous I do get sick of their monotony and regularity (Survey Respondent 40, August 2013).

These comments refer to what might seem very minor events, yet their regularity indicated that some female teachers actively reinforced gender stereotypes. Male primary teachers have previously stated that gender jibes from their female colleagues were cumulative (Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015), and could lead to them feeling excluded from social situations at work. The actions of these female colleagues might have been motivated by the societal perception that men have a good sense of humour (Jones, 2007). Despite the social acceptance of this perception (Cushman, 2008), female teachers who perpetuate hegemonic constructions of masculinity might need

to be aware of the effects their actions can have on their relationships with their male colleagues.

Despite some participants feeling isolated because of the comments from female colleagues, other participants talked about staff room jokes in a more positive light. Survey respondents 4 and 12 talked about enjoying the company and banter of male and female colleagues in their staffrooms. Their statements align with the findings of previous research such as that by Jones (2007) who suggested that not all participants felt isolated in their school staffrooms. Rather, these comments, and the comments above, indicate that participants enjoyed having fun with their colleagues, but not being made fun of by their colleagues. This situation is probably true for all people, and again suggests that positive relationships with colleagues are an important influence on male primary teachers' perceptions of their work context.

Factors such as personality and social skills could contribute to male primary teachers' abilities to develop positive professional relationships with their colleagues. Comments from some participants in this study indicated that developing these positive relationships with their female colleagues was not a difficult challenge for them because of their personal attributes and experiences;

> I don't really feel more isolated with the reduced number of men at the school. I don't rely on male company to feel empowered or anything. It's good to have male company but I'm not dependent on it. I can stand on my own two feet and have conversations with females about all sorts of topics (Harry, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I don't mind being in the minority. I grew up with younger sisters so I am used to talking and interacting with females and so it is not a problem for me (Survey Respondent 46, August 2013)

> I think it [developing positive relationships] is just a matter of having a friendly/personable disposition like all teachers/staff in a workplace would need to have. I don't see it as an issue of males are isolated; I think anyone could be isolated. You have to make the effort to get to know colleagues and what you have in common with them (Survey Respondent 48, August 2013).

These participant comments suggest that social isolation might be less about gender and more about how much common ground these men had with their female colleagues. Being proactive in identifying these common interests and experiences could strongly influence whether participants were constructed, or constructing themselves, as different to their colleagues. Sumsion (2000) stated that male primary teachers are constantly negotiating their "otherness" (p. 130), which she defined as how they differ from, or resemble, their female colleagues, and how they enact these differences and similarities. Gender is a definite contributor to constructions of 'other', yet male primary teachers could potentially feel isolated in a room full of male miners, mechanics or truck drivers. This isolation would be related to feelings of being an outsider due to factors such as a lack of common mannerisms, interests and knowledge, rather than gender.

Irrespective of the factors that influenced participants' abilities to develop positive professional relationships, the social isolation caused by a lack of these positive relationships was a difficult challenge for some participants in this study. The

importance of positive professional relationships has been identified by previous research on male primary teachers (e.g., Ashcraft & Sevier, 2006; Cushman, 2005a), who have noted the social isolation their absence can result in. Therefore, in order to address the research questions underpinning this study, it is appropriate to elucidate the coping strategies and supports that assisted participants in this study cope with the difficulties they experienced developing positive professional relationships with their colleagues.

7.3 Strategies and Supports

Male primary teachers dealing with the professional relationship challenges in their schools require adequate coping strategies and coping efficacy to persist in their profession. Participants in this study described numerous strategies and supports that helped them to develop these relationships and reduce their perceptions of social isolation. These strategies and supports included both in school and out of school plans. In most cases, participants who identified these challenges also described coping strategies and supports. Therefore the data in this chapter should not been seen as coming from different groups of participants who did, and did not have difficulties developing positive professional relationships. Rather, these data came from one group of male primary teachers who, regardless of their difficulties with these challenges, had adequate supports, strategies and coping efficacy to cope with this challenge. These strategies included pursuing masculine hobbies and the support of trusted female colleagues. Strategies and supports will be presented concurrently due to the close relationships between them. As with the previous challenge section, this section will begin with staffroom interactions, as this was the only context specifically

mentioned by participants in regards to developing relationships with their teaching colleagues.

7.3.1 Staffroom Interactions

Social conversations during break times are a strong contributor to the development of positive relationships between teaching colleagues. Participants in this study identified the staffroom as the context where these relationships were most apparent. Therefore the identification of supports and strategies for this context are vital to help male primary teachers experiencing similar social isolation in their schools. Some strategies suggested by participants in this study included;

> It [not being actively involved in staffroom conversations] has its advantages because I can walk out of a room and no one cares because they are talking to each other. They can't leave because they have to say the next thing, whereas I can just go! (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014)

> Staffroom conversations can be pretty boring, all about what colour did you dye your hair on the weekend and stuff like that. I suppose that can be a challenge but I guess I've been teaching too long for that to bother me. I'll initiate a conversation with anybody about a topic I want to discuss (Harry, Interview 1, August 2014)

> If I am the only male in the staffroom and there is food I will often hang around and read the sports pages in the paper and play on my phone. If there is no food, men or female teachers I get on well with then I will go back to my office and do some work or go outside and chat with students. This can be a

> bit lonely at times but it does mean that I can leave earlier and spend more time with friends and family (Survey Respondent 4, August 2013).

These comments indicated that some participants in this study were often not engaged in informal break time conversations with their female colleagues. Being proactive in starting conversations appeared to help participants such as Harry deal with his female dominated staffroom. Harry acknowledged that isolation was a challenge for him, but he had adequate coping efficacy because of his previous teaching experience. These previous experiences might have enabled him to develop deeper relationships with his colleagues, and increase the number of conversation topics he could discuss with them. Participants in this study did not appear to have difficulty having teaching and learning related work conversations with their female colleagues. Male primary teachers struggling to develop positive relationships with their colleagues could consider initiating conversations on common work related topics that could then move onto more social topics once a common interest is identified.

Fred later indicated his comment was intended to be humorous, yet the positive attitude he displayed was also evident in the statements of participants whose coping strategies included avoiding the staffroom. Participants talked about spending less time in the staffroom being an advantage because they could catch up on administration tasks or got outside and build rapport with students. The strategies described by these participants align with the findings of previous research (e.g., Kauppinen-Toropainen & Lammi, 1993; Smith, 2008) that described how this approach could possibly lead to earlier promotion due to these men appearing well organised and consistently meeting work deadlines. This approach could therefore be utilised by other male primary teachers struggling to initiate and participate in social

staffroom conversations with their teaching colleagues. Turning the avoidance of a potentially negative staffroom situation into a positive rapport building opportunity appeared to be an important strategy for some participants struggling to develop positive professional relationships with their female teaching colleagues. Classifying a positive mindset as a strategy might be debateable, yet Carver (1997) did list positive reframing as a functional emotion focused coping strategy. This classification suggested that the constructive approach exhibited by participants could be considered a possible coping strategy for other male primary teachers in similar positions.

An alternative interpretation of doing administration tasks and building rapport with students is that these strategies are actually self-isolating behaviours. This interpretation aligns with Smith's (2008) finding that male primary teachers both exclude themselves from social situations and feel excluded from them. These behaviours could be seen as self-distraction. Carver (1997) defines self-distraction as turning to work or other activities to reduce your focus on another issue. These dysfunctional coping strategies might remove male primary teachers from uncomfortable staffroom interactions, but would also deny them the opportunity to build the relationships with their colleagues that would reduce this discomfort. Despite the potential negatives of these strategies, they did appear to help some participants cope with the social isolation they experienced in their schools. Carver and Connor-Smith (2010) provided some support for the use of this strategy when they reclassified self-distraction as an accommodative coping strategy. Accommodative strategies are aimed at adjusting to a challenge rather than trying to control it. Self-distraction has historically been considered disengagement coping, yet

Carver and Conner-Smith acknowledged that confirmatory factor analyses had consistently indicated that intentionally participating in other more enjoyable activities was a successful means of adapting to negative situations. This success did, however, come with some risk for participants in this study.

Building rapport with students at lunchtime was done in a public setting; however the strategy of retreating to their classrooms to catch up on work could leave some male primary teachers vulnerable to situations where they could end up one on one with students. As discussed in the physical contact chapter, this strategy can be a dangerous situation for a male primary teacher. The likelihood of this situation arising resulted in some participants questioning where they should go during their break times if they did not feel comfortable in the staffroom. One strategy discussed by Harry could be an option for these male primary teachers. Harry stated that he would often go for a walk in a park next to his school during lunchtimes. Going for a walk might seem to be another self-isolating behaviour, yet it was highly beneficial for his physical health (Fan et al., 2013), and appeared to be an important opportunity for Harry to clear his head and come back refreshed for his next lesson. This strategy could also be enacted by other male primary teachers who do not have male teaching colleagues, and do not want to be in the staffroom with their female colleagues, or in their classroom alone. Men who choose self-isolating behaviours should be aware that these strategies will not help them deal with this challenge long term. Being aware of this reality and developing the skills and strategies required to develop positive relationships with all teaching colleagues appeared to be a more practical and functional coping strategy for male primary teachers working in female dominated schools.

7.3.2 Interactions with Other Male Teachers

Male primary teachers value the companionship of other male teachers in their schools. Participants in this study specifically stated that they would find their jobs very difficult without the support of their male colleagues. Numerous participants made comments about how having positive professional relationships with their male teaching colleagues greatly reduced their perceptions of social isolation;

> There are four other male primary teachers here; the most I've ever worked with so we are really lucky. I probably tend to talk to them more often because we have common interests but also because the communication is just a bit easier. You can talk about stuff and you understand each other. So yes social isolation is a problem but it doesn't bother me as I am used to it now, and having a few other blokes around certainly helps (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014)

> Having another male around does contribute to my workplace happiness because I can chat to him about common interests and do stuff together after work such as mountain biking. So I guess it's a contributor to work satisfaction and for my social engagement it is really good. It is nice when you cannot just hear a story but relate to it because you have the same hobbies and you're interested in that stuff as well. It allows the discussions to be more engaging. I don't really have that opportunity with any of the female teachers (Steve, Interview 2, November 2014)

> It is my definite preference to have other men around because it improves the social side of my work. I feel it is more fun, more welcoming and collegial,

> and more of an inclusive community when there are more men on staff. I think this is of great benefit to staff and students (Survey Respondent 11, August 2013).

These comments indicated that participants in this study greatly valued the opportunity to interact with other men and discuss common interests. Admittedly, this finding could be described as stating the obvious, yet it has been reported in previous research on male primary teachers (e.g., Cooney & Bittner, 2001; Robison, 2016; Smith, 2008). Fred stating that he felt lucky in his present school reflected his previous experiences of being the only male primary teachers in his school. Knowing they had positive relationships with male colleagues whom they could talk to and understand was a strong positive influence on participants' perceptions of social isolation in their female dominated schools, and their ability to cope with it. Fred's comments about being "used to it now" indicated that he had adequate coping efficacy for dealing with his social isolation. This coping efficacy was positively influenced by his previous experiences, and his positive relationships with his male teaching colleagues.

Interaction with other males can contribute to the work satisfaction of male primary teachers. Participants such as Steve specifically stated that their male teaching colleagues positively influenced their work satisfaction. This finding is highly relevant to this study because work satisfaction has been found to be crucial for teacher retention (Kyriacou et al., 2003). Lent and Brown (2006) stated that environmental influences such as colleague support are an important factor in determining work satisfaction. Their comments suggest that if men have the support of other male teachers they will feel less isolated, and therefore more likely to persist

in the profession. Unfortunately not all participants in this study had male colleagues to assist them in coping with their isolation.

As revealed previously, participants' perceptions of social isolation did not directly connect with the number of male colleagues they had. That said, social isolation appeared to be a more difficult challenge for participants such as James who was the only male classroom teacher in their school. His previous comments about wanting to work somewhere he had more colleagues with similar interests were in obvious contrast to Fred's comments above. James' situation was further intensified by the fact that he had experienced positive relationships with his male teaching colleagues at previous schools. The difficulties faced by socially isolated male primary teachers struggling with relationship development challenges might be reduced by these men moving to schools with other males, yet this solution is unlikely to be useful for all isolated men. It would also reduce the already small numbers of men in some schools to zero and move further away from the gender balance staffroom that some participants, and previous literature (e.g., Cushman, 2007; Mulholland & Hansen 2003), suggest is highly beneficial to student outcomes. In addition to these considerations, pragmatic factors such as distance, family and social responsibilities, and lack of vacancies are likely to mean moving schools is very difficult for some male primary teachers. These men therefore require alternative coping strategies that they can utilise within their current schools, and in their personal leisure time. One strategy mentioned by participants in this study was engaging in 'masculine' hobbies outside of school hours.

Masculine Hobbies

Participating in out of school activities can enable isolated male primary teachers to have the male interaction they do not experience during their working day. These activities can help to balance a lack of positive relationships with their female teaching colleagues. Several participants specifically mentioned pursuing hobbies outside school hours where they could interact with more men. For example;

> I have a big 40-year-old steel yacht which I enjoy working on and sailing, this provides an opportunity to engage in activities in more traditionally male environments. I probably spend more time working on it than sailing it, but I actually find that's good because it's an outlet. I can go to Nuts and Bolts or Brierley's Fittings and talk to a bloke about something and I can pick up a nut and bolt and go and do something with it, so in some ways I use that as a social avenue to counteract the social isolation at work, and as a way of finding people I can relate to in a different more comfortable setting (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014)

> I have joined the Lions Club to get to know some more people. The Lions Club does have females but there are certainly a lot more male members so it's good. I am forever looking for other little things to do with other blokes. I try and get out and have a fish as often as possible and invite other people along, try to get people round to our house as often as possible socially. It is definitely a time for branching out on the weekend (James, Interview 2, November 2014)

> I guess I view my work as my work and I seek good male relationships outside of my work to live a healthy lifestyle (Survey Respondent 11, August 2013)

> My female colleagues are generally good to work with. I have other ways of having contact with males, such as playing sport, and male friendships (Survey Respondent 35, August 2013).

It appeared that some participants in this study had accepted that their work was a female dominated environment and actively sought positive relationships and interaction with other men outside of work. Foster and Newman (2005) similarly encountered male primary teachers who deliberately included more masculine activities where they were surrounded by other men as parts of their social life. Masculine activities can be considered pursuits that align with the tenets of hegemonic masculinity. These activities could include drinking at the pub as well as memberships of social clubs, sports teams and gyms. Male primary teachers appeared to value these activities as they found it easier to develop positive relationships within these more masculine contexts.

As identified in the previous chapters, participants in this study stated that they wanted to be treated the same as their female colleagues. Examples of this equal treatment included not being viewed with suspicion when giving an upset student a hug and not being expected to perform masculine roles within their schools. Yet outside of work these men were reinforcing and actively contributing to gendered stereotypes regarding appropriate masculine behaviours. Male primary teachers might be motivated to participate in masculine activities in order to establish themselves as "properly masculine" (Foster & Newman, 2005, p. 352). The desire to be viewed as

properly male is understandable in light of the consequences of being seen otherwise, as discussed in the physical contact chapter. Awareness about the perceptions of other people might have influenced participants' choice of social activities as much as their difficulty to develop positive professional relationships with their female colleagues.

Primary teaching has traditionally been a female dominated profession. This situation has resulted in a societal perception that primary teaching is women's work (e.g., Bhana & Moosa, 2016; Carrington, 2002; Mills et al., 2004; Moss-Racusin & Johnson, 2016). The suspicion surrounding men who choose to become primary teachers seems to be an important influence for male primary teachers when constructing their professional identities. This identity construction inevitably incorporates difficult decisions about resisting or conforming to gender stereotyping in relation to appropriate masculine behaviours (Sumsion, 2000). These men seemingly need to teach and nurture young children, while also displaying the attributes of a "real man" (Mills et al., 2008, p. 71). To not do so would risk rejection from children who have already internalised traditional gender roles and behaviours (Alloway, 1995; Roulston & Mills, 2000). Participants' acceptance, and persistence in the primary teaching profession might have been contributed to by their display of a "reassuringly conventional masculinity" (Sumsion, 2000, p. 138). This masculinity is contributed to by behaviours in, and out of school hours.

Whilst this discussion has gone over some of the ground covered in previous chapters, it is important to discuss these issues here in light of participants' possible motivations for participating in masculine hobbies to deal a lack of positive relationships with their female teaching colleagues. This strategy could be seen as self-distraction, or possibly even active coping. As discussed previously both these

classifications can be considered functional coping strategies. Despite contradictions surrounding gendered roles, pursuing masculine hobbies appeared to be a successful coping strategy for those participants who enacted it. This male interaction outside of school positively influenced participants' efficacy for dealing with the social isolation they experienced in their work contexts. Other male primary teachers could therefore use this strategy, in conjunction with in school strategies and supports; to cope with the school based social isolation they experience as a result of struggling to develop positive professional relationships with the work colleagues. In school strategies are primarily concerned with male primary teachers' interactions with, and support from their school leaders and female colleagues.

7.3.3 Support from School Leaders

School leaders can have a substantial influence on male primary teachers' abilities to develop positive professional relationships with their female teaching colleagues. They are responsible for the development and maintenance of a supportive and collegial atmosphere where all staff feel included and valued. This welcoming environment is an important factor for both staff morale and teacher retention (Brown & Wynn, 2009). Ashiedu and Scott-Ladd (2012) additionally noted that building a supportive and positive workplace generated a sense of comradeship that improved colleague relationships and helped to retain employees. Their study of Australian teachers did not have a specific focus on male primary teachers, yet connections surrounding supportive workplaces can be drawn to the statements of participants in this study.

Fred, James and Steve noted that their principals were a positive influence on their supportive and inclusive workplaces. This positive influence reduced their

perceptions of isolation and increased the likelihood of them persisting within the profession:

> When parents grumble about someone or something as they inevitably do from time to time they will come and talk to me in a supportive way; "just making you aware that this has been said". I do really appreciate that (Fred, Interview 2, November 2014)

> The principal is very supportive. She is very accommodating to me and everyone else. She listens to what I have to say and when I do say things [at staff meetings] she and the other staff generally nod in agreement (James, Interview 2, November 2014)

> The principals are very supportive. They did say to me last year that "we've got a male HPE [health and physical education] teacher coming next year". They came and told me with the obvious expectation that I would be happy about that. So I think they do recognise, without actually having to say it, that having another male around does contribute to my workplace happiness and reduce my social isolation (Steve, Interview 2, November 2014).

These statements related to Ashiedu and Scott-Ladd (2012) finding that teachers having input and influence over decisions, and being kept apprised of developments was an important factor in them feeling included in their schools. These actions might appear to be a minor issue, yet these participants greatly appreciated the effort their principals made to inform them of issues and incidents as they arose and support them to deal with them as required. Their inclusive approach, and awareness of the challenges faced by their male teachers, had resulted in these participants feeling like

they were valued members of their staff group. There was no indication that Steve's social isolation was a consideration when the HPE teacher was appointed, but he perceived his principal's awareness of the positive outcomes of this decision for him, as an indication of support. The knowledge that they had this support was a strong positive influence on participants' perceptions of the supportiveness of their workplaces, and their ability to develop positive relationships within it. These positive relationships appeared to be a positive influence on participants' perceptions of their social isolation.

7.3.4 Trusted Female Colleagues

In addition to support from school leaders, some participants identified support from their female colleagues as a vital contributor to their ability to develop positive professional relationships. The majority of participants felt they were supported by their female colleagues, but this perception was often insufficient towards their feelings of isolation. Lent (2012) acknowledged that perceived support could positively influence career persistence, yet actual social support is likely to be a more meaningful and long lasting influence.

One prominent theme regarding actual support that emerged out of the interview data was the notion of the trusted female colleague. Interview participants indicated that they had female colleagues that consistently supported them both publically and privately. This support was a substantial influence on their ability to develop positive professional relationships with their other female colleagues;

> So yes there are times when it [working in a female dominated workplace] frustrates me immensely but what makes it work is that I do have other male

> teachers at the school and I have female teachers who I trust and have worked with and who know me well enough to know that I always do things the right way to the best of my ability. I have had some extraordinary support from some female staff (Fenton, Interview 1, August 2014).
>
> Fortunately I have always had females who I got on with and understood me and they could help me out in those situations [when he is having difficulty working in a female dominated environment]. It's like at a staff meeting when I'm trying to work out what is really being said, not just what the words are. I've got a few women I get along with and sometimes I'll say to them afterwards "what was actually going on there?" I'll get them to interpret. That help is really important (Fred, Interview 1, August 2014)
>
> I have several females who I get on well with. They back me up and have even defended me to other female staff. I would really struggle without them (Survey Respondent 21, August 2013).

These comments revealed that the support that participants received from their trusted female colleagues was essential to their ability to cope with their female dominated workplaces and persist within the profession. This support was particularly important for participants such as Fenton whose isolation was intensified by a negative relationship with his principal. Participants willingly acknowledged that they would feel considerably more isolated without the support and guidance of these women. The absence of this support would therefore also negatively affect participants' efficacy for dealing with the challenge of developing positive professional relationships in their workplaces (Lent, 2012). Identifying female colleagues who can

give similar trust and support could assist other male primary teachers who feel socially isolated within their schools.

In some ways trusted female colleagues could be considered mentors for male primary teachers negotiating challenges associated with working in female dominated schools. Despite male primary teachers not identifying themselves as protégés due to being on the same hierarchical level as their female colleagues, they might have indeed been in a mentor-mentee relationship. The word mentor has been defined in various ways (Haggard, Dougherty, Turban, & Wilbanks; 2011). The majority of studies have implied, or directly stated a hierarchical difference between the mentor and the mentee, yet some definitions allow for a more experienced peer to serve as a mentor (e.g., Godshalk & Sosik, 2003), and other studies specifically included peers as possible mentors (e.g., Eby, McManus, Simon, & Russell, 2000). Most definitions of mentoring refer to support, guidance and advice being given by someone with advanced knowledge and experience (Haggard et al., 2011). As trusted female colleagues are likely to have more knowledge of successfully navigating the challenges of female dominated workplaces, these definitions would appear to allow for them to be classified as mentors.

In addition to considering the various definitions of mentors, it is important to examine the role of mentors within SCCT. A key assumption within SCCT is that people are more likely to implement career choices if they perceive and experience strong supports to their choices (Lent, 2012). Lent classified access to mentors as an environmental support that can assist an individual to pursue their career choices and goals, such as persisting within their profession. This classification infers that the presence of trusted mentors might be an important influence on male primary teachers

being able to cope with the gender related challenges they face, and thus continue teaching. Additionally, interactions with mentors might positively influence perceptions of challenges, and provide strategies for helping to cope with them (Lent et al., 2000). As supports and challenges can be seen as polar opposites, and having a mentor is considered a support; then not having access to a mentor could be considered a challenge in itself. Male primary teachers struggling to cope with the gender related challenges they face in their profession should therefore be active in pursuing and establishing relationships with more knowledgeable mentors. Men without an experienced male teacher to mentor them might need to look to some of their female colleagues to fulfil this role.

Participants in this study described a number of ways in which they were able to develop close relationships with their trusted female colleagues. Participants described how they had naturally developed rapport with female colleagues who had common interests or sense of humour, whereas others had developed positive relationships with these women through many years of working together. Other participants such as Fred reported that they had initiated these relationships in other ways;

> Researcher: Last interview you talked about how you rely on trusted females to help you interpret staff meetings and other social interactions. How do you identify or start to develop those relationships with those females that can help you with things you don't understand?
>
> Fred: Well you often hear the old "we need more men in primary schools" and all that sort of standard stuff. But I tend to think that my gender shouldn't

> matter and it's usually the ones that haven't seen me as different just because I'm a bloke. I've just been treated on the same basis. They have been more that "we need good teachers" which means I can actually have discussions with them about quality teaching not just how it's good that I'm a man in this area. So that is probably being how I've developed those relationships.
>
> Researcher: So it has been you reacting to how they have initially responded to?
>
> Fred: Yes. If they are looking at me as just a professional in the job then I can go to them with professional concerns; you know "can you explain this to me" or "this has happened, things may become awkward, can you be aware". I would definitely struggle without them (Fred, Interview 2, November 2014).

It appeared that Fred had reacted positively to those women who had interacted with him in line with what Burn and Pratt-Adams (2015) called the "pedagogic script" (p. 163). This script is concerned with teaching and learning rather than outdated gender stereotypes. As these women had treated Fred as an equal colleague, he felt that he could approach them with any teaching or school related questions or concerns he had. Knowing that these colleagues considered him an equal and were prepared to help him deal with any issues that arose was a very positive influence on Fred's perceptions of his social isolation, and efficacy for coping with it. Other male primary teachers feeling socially isolated within their schools could therefore prioritise the development of similar supportive relationships with female colleagues in their schools.

7.4 Conclusion and Implications

In this chapter I have examined the major difficulties for male primary teachers developing positive professional relationships with their teaching colleagues. I have also detailed the coping strategies used by participants to deal with this challenge, and the influence of coping efficacy on their perception of this challenge. The social isolation caused by a lack of positive professional relationships presented difficulties for some participants in this study, but not for others. Unsurprisingly, participants with few or no male colleagues felt more isolated than those with numerous male teaching colleagues. Yet there were inconsistencies in the relationship between number of male colleagues and perceptions of isolation. This finding suggested that perceptions of social isolation might have been less affected by gender, and more the quality of the relationships participants had with their teaching colleagues. Social isolation appeared to be influenced by participants being constructed, or constructing themselves, as different to their colleagues. Gender is a definite contributor to constructions of 'other'. Yet, other factors such as common mannerisms, interests and knowledge can be equally influential. Therefore, for some participants in this study, perceptions of isolation might be more about having positive professional relationships with all their colleagues rather than having increased numbers of male colleagues.

Regardless of the factors that contributed to the difficulty of developing positive professional relationships in their schools, participants in this study appeared to be able to cope with this challenge. This ability appeared to be influenced by the support they received, the coping strategies they used, and the level of coping efficacy they presented. Participant data revealed that strong support from other male teachers,

trusted female colleagues, and school leaders were vital for male primary teachers struggling with relationship development challenges in their schools. The importance of this support suggested that male primary teachers might perceive much higher levels of social isolation if they did not have positive interactions with these groups. All interview participants could rely on at least one of these three support groups to positively influence their coping efficacy for dealing with their social isolation. Their support and understanding enabled participants in this study to develop more positive professional relationships with all of their work colleagues and consequently feel more included within their staff group. The willingness of trusted female colleagues to mentor participants through the intricacies of female dominated schools was a strong positive influence on participants' perceptions of, and efficacy for coping with, this gender related challenge.

Participants in this study indicated that they had adequate coping efficacy to deal with the challenges associated with developing positive professional relationships, and persist within the primary teaching profession. As demonstrated in previous chapters, participant data from this study were related to coping efficacy through an interpretive process. Many participants appeared to have become accustomed to their female dominated work environments over their years of teaching, and others such as Steve had a smooth transition to the primary teaching environment after previously working in other female dominated professions such as nursing. As suggested by Lent et al. (2005), this coping efficacy had moderated the influence of this challenge. Participants spoke about their ability to cope with relationship development based challenges and phrases like "I'm just used to it now" and "I just deal with it" were regularly used. Participants' coping efficacy seemed to

have been positively influenced by the environmental supports mentioned previously, and successful previous use of coping strategies.

Participants indicated that their effective use of coping strategies was a strong positive influence on their coping efficacy for dealing with the challenge of developing professional relationships with their work colleagues. Personal performance accomplishments appeared to be the most important of Bandura (1977) sources of efficacy beliefs for helping participants in this study deal with this challenge. Successfully using strategies such as initiating conversations about common interests and participating in masculine hobbies outside of school appeared to have improved participants' perceptions of this challenge, and consequently their efficacy for dealing with it. Despite some contradictions surrounding the perpetuation of gendered roles, these strategies appeared to be successful for participants struggling with relationship development challenges and the resultant work based social isolation.

When compared to the findings of Carver (1997), participants in this study predominantly used functional coping strategies such as active coping and positive reframing. Participant responses also provided some evidence of potentially dysfunctional coping strategies such as self-distraction. This term could be used to describe participant strategies such as avoiding the staffroom or engaging in more masculine hobbies outside school hours where they could interact with more men. Similar to the avoidance strategies discussed in the physical contact chapter, I believe this classification is a little tough on these men. Participant data revealed that they had undertaken this approach as part of a positive reframing strategy. In this way participants viewed working in a female dominated school as being a part of a

balanced lifestyle in which they had adequate interaction with other males. Despite not removing the gender related challenge, this positive framing enabled participants in this study to cope with it and persist within the profession. Male primary teachers should be aware that these strategies will not help them deal with this challenge long term. Developing the skills and strategies required to develop positive relationships with all teaching colleagues is likely to be a more functional coping strategy for men teaching in female dominated primary schools.

When compared to the gender related challenges of fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact and expectations to perform masculine roles, there was less participant data in relation to this challenge. This data shortage might have been caused by participants' viewing relationship development as a less difficult challenge that they could deal with by enacting the various coping strategies described above. Alternatively gender might have just been one element of a far more complex challenge. Further analysis of the survey instrument suggested the reduced data volume for this challenge might have had a more practical explanation.

The survey instrument was developed to ascertain the difficulty of the gender related challenges faced by male primary teachers, and identify strategies for coping with these challenges. Having a focus on the practical strategies participants used did influence the format of the survey instrument. Participants were asked to rate the difficulty of the challenge, but did not have to describe why it was a challenge for them, as these open-ended questions were optional. The non-compulsory nature of these questions might have resulted in participants not fully describing the difficulty of this challenge, and the factors that influenced it. Analysis of the survey results revealed that the majority of participants who rated social isolation as a moderate or

critical challenge had chosen not to add descriptive text. In contrast, participants who indicated social isolation was not a challenge for them were specifically asked to describe why this was the case and detail the coping strategies they used. The text boxes for these questions were larger and invited more detailed responses. Future researchers using this survey instrument should consider making all questions compulsory as well as asking questions surrounding the effect of factors such as teaching experience, personality, and social skills on male primary teachers' abilities to develop positive professional relationships with their teaching colleagues. Other potential limitations of the survey instrument will be discussed in the following conclusion chapter. This conclusion will draw together the common themes discussed throughout the challenge related discussion chapters and discuss the future implications of this research.

Chapter 8

Conclusion

8.1 Introduction

In this thesis I have identified the gender related challenges faced by male primary teachers. Through examining the perceptions and lived experiences of practising Tasmanian male primary teachers, the findings of this study revealed a range of both functional and dysfunctional coping strategies for dealing with these challenges. Before the summation of these findings is presented, I would like to caution the reader that this was an exploratory study within a geographically remote island population. Therefore the findings and suggestions for future practice have to be viewed with caution. I cannot make broad generalisations from my findings, as the information participants shared may not be applicable to male primary teachers working in different school and community contexts. Rather, this study explored the voices of Tasmanian male primary teachers to provide insight into the gender related challenges they face, the strategies they use to cope with them, and whether coping efficacy moderated the influence of these challenges. This population was chosen because of my personal interests and previous teaching experiences. Methodological decisions such as interviewing participants twice and using strategies such as member

checking were designed to ensure I maintained my reflexive position, and represented participant data accurately. Despite the limitations of this particular research context, some of the strategies that proved successful for participants in this study could potentially assist other male primary teachers cope with the gender related challenges they face and might serve to become variables of interest for future research in this area.

Participants' experiences and perceptions were examined through the lens of Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT; Lent et al., 1994). Within SCCT, Lent and colleagues highlighted the complex interactions between people, their behaviour, and their environments. These interactions helped to explain the influence of coping strategies and coping efficacy on participants' ability to deal with gender related challenges. As I have investigated numerous challenges throughout the previous chapters, it is important to draw together the common themes that have been discussed. This summation will be focused around the research questions that have guided this study:

1. What gender related challenges do Tasmanian male primary teachers face in their profession?
2. How do Tasmanian male primary teachers cope with the gender related challenges they face?
    a. Does coping efficacy moderate the influence of the gender related challenges faced by Tasmanian male primary teachers?

Inevitably there is a degree of overlap between the themes presented, as constructs such as challenges, strategies and coping efficacy are closely interrelated. The

limitations of this research will be addressed in a final section focussed on suggestions for furthering this line of research inquiry.

8.2 Gender Related Challenges

Male primary teachers can face numerous gender related challenges in their profession. Participant data from this study has supported the existence and difficulty of challenges identified in previous research (e.g., Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Cushman, 2007; Kauppinen-Toropainen & Lammi, 1993). The major gender related challenges faced by participants in this study were fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact, an expectation to take on masculine roles within their schools, and social isolation caused by difficulties in developing positive professional relationships with their work colleagues. Despite the uniqueness of the complex influences that contributed to the difficulty of these challenges, participants' experiences of dealing with these challenges revealed some common themes. Participants' experiences appeared to be most influenced by the contested societal constructions of gender and masculinity, and schools perpetuating traditional hegemonic constructions.

Society continues to construct appropriate behaviours for men and women in predominantly traditional ways. These constructions can influence the behaviour and experiences of male primary teachers (Kauppinen-Toropainen & Lammi, 1993). Society has evolved considerably since the early 1990s, yet many gendered beliefs and double standards appear to have remained the same. These gendered double standards, and the fear and uncertainty they caused, were most evident in relation to physical contact. Participants in this study believed it was socially acceptable for female teachers to make physical contact with their students when required, but did

not believe this acceptance extended to them. Rather, participants believed they would be perceived negatively and suspected of having inappropriate intentions if they attempted to make the same physical contact as their female colleagues. Consequently, the majority of participants in this study indicated that they would continue to exhibit traditional masculine behaviours to position themselves as a "real man" (Mills et al., 2008, p. 71). Their behaviour could have been motivated by a desire to avoid being perceived as a homosexual and/or a paedophile (Bhana & Moosa, 2015; Mills et al., 2004) and therefore dangerous to children. The fear and uncertainty participants experienced as they tried to negotiate performing a conventional masculinity within the caring and nurturing requirements of a primary school teacher was clearly evident in their responses.

Displaying a hegemonic masculinity while teaching young children is not an easy task. The difficulty of this situation was obvious across all three thematic discussion chapters, and had resulted in many participants enacting strategies for self-protection. Participants stated that they avoided physical contact, performed masculine roles and engaged in masculine hobbies outside of school to demonstrate a societally acceptable masculinity that reduced their fear of being perceived negatively and falsely accused of inappropriate behaviour. These strategies are understandable, yet they reinforced and role modelled a traditional hegemonic masculinity rather than challenging it. This approach is disappointing in light of researchers (e.g., Cushman 2008, White, 2011) stating that providing positive male role models that challenge traditional masculine behaviours was a key argument for increasing the number of male teachers in primary schools.

Some schools perpetuate and reinforce traditional constructions of gender by socialising children to a division between acceptable masculine and feminine roles (Cushman, 2005a). Participants stated that they had experienced this gendered division of labour, which had resulted in expectations for them to perform masculine roles involving behaviour management and manual labour. If young children see the continued modelling of gendered roles then these traditional social constructions are likely to persist for future generations (Petersen, 2014). School leaders cannot change these gender constructions themselves, but they can create and promote a supportive school environment that does not perpetuate them. Data from the current study revealed that this environment could involve encouraging female teachers to perform roles such as behaviour management, and men taking on more nurturing responsibilities. These alternative role allocations could change children's' perceptions of what is appropriate behaviour for men and women, and encourage them to consider a greater range of potential futures. This shift in school practice could then be a catalyst for changing traditional societal constructions about appropriate behaviour for men and women.

In order to take on the more nurturing roles associated with teaching younger children, male primary teachers need to feel trusted and supported to make appropriate physical contact when they believe it is required to provide care and support to their students. Sargent (2000) suggested that for men "nurturing children is dangerous close to molesting them" (p. 417). If more male primary teachers are to feel confident interacting with their students in the same ways their female colleagues do, the fear and uncertainty they experience surrounding physical contact and false accusations needs to be reduced. Collaboration between schools, society, and the

media might help to achieve this. If this does not occur then the findings from this study suggest that the opportunity for men to challenge traditional gender stereotypes in primary schools might be unrealistic. In the meantime those male primary teachers who struggle balancing self-protection with the caring and nurturing their young students require might need to enact some of the strategies discussed in the previous discussion chapters.

8.3 Coping Strategies and Supports

Male primary teachers have left the profession because of the gender related challenges they face (Mills et al., 2008). Despite the difficulty of the challenges discussed in this thesis, no participants in this study indicated that they planned to leave the profession. This positive finding might be due to the participants having strong strategies and supports within their schools and personal lives (Lent et al., 1994). In terms of the more general coping literature (e.g., Carver, 1997; Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010), participants' in this study displayed coping strategies that were predominantly classified as functional. Participant data presented examples of functional problem-focused strategies such as active coping, as well as functional emotion-focused strategies such as positive reframing. Despite the uniqueness of some of these strategies, participants' experiences revealed common themes such as the importance of positive professional relationships with their teaching colleagues and school leaders.

Most male primary teachers work in schools with a predominantly female staff. Those participants in this study who did have male teaching colleagues specifically remarked that they greatly valued the companionship of these other men

in their schools. They described how male colleagues could act as mentors, give advice in areas such as physical contact, share masculine roles, reduce perceptions of isolation, and socialise out of school hours. Some participants stated that they felt very lucky to have other men teaching in their school, and would find their jobs very difficult without the support of their male colleagues. A key assumption within SCCT is that people are more likely to persist in their profession if they experience strong environmental supports (Lent, 2012). Numerous participants in this study appeared to view their male colleagues as an important support mechanism. Other participants without male teaching colleagues indicated that they looked to their female colleagues and school leaders for support. This support was a key contributor to their ability to cope with the gender related challenges they faced, and remain within the primary teaching profession.

School leaders can be a substantial influence on male primary teachers' abilities to cope with the gender related challenges they face. In addition to not perpetuating the traditional constructions of gender mentioned previously, they are responsible for developing a welcoming environment where all staff feel included and valued (Ashiedu & Scott-Ladd, 2012). Some participants in this study specifically commented on high levels of support from their principal. This support was a positive influence on participants' perceptions of the gender related challenges they faced, and enabled them to enact coping strategies to deal with these challenges. The development of positive professional relationships with their school leaders should be a priority for all teachers, particularly isolated male primary teachers struggling to deal with gender related challenges such as expectations to take on masculine roles.

In addition to support from school leaders, participants identified support from their female colleagues as a vital contributor to their ability to cope with the gender related challenges they faced. The support and advice of these trusted female colleagues enabled participants in this study to navigate the complex social contexts in which they worked. This advice was a positive influence on participants' perceptions of the gender related challenges they faced, and their efficacy for coping with them. The development of strong positive relationships with female colleagues could also be a key focus for male primary teachers with low coping efficacy for dealing with the gender related challenges they face in their schools.

8.4 Coping Efficacy

Coping efficacy can moderate male primary teachers' perceptions of the gender related challenges they face. Lent (2012) stated that prior performance accomplishments are often the strongest influence on coping efficacy, with success at a given task leading to strong efficacy beliefs in relation to that task. The most important sources of coping efficacy and positive outcomes expectations for participants in this study were personal performance accomplishments and vicarious learning. These sources are closely connected as once participants had observed a mentor or colleague using a successful strategy, they then used this strategy themselves. Therefore participants' positive efficacy beliefs came from both their observation of the successful strategy being used, and their subsequent successful use of the strategy themselves (Lent et al., 2000). Both these sources positively influenced participants' outcome expectations and perceptions of their ability to deal with the gender related challenges they faced in their profession. Verbal persuasion is another

important source of efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1977). This verbal persuasion had been influential early in the careers of participants in this study. Participants acknowledged they had benefitted from advice from more experienced male colleagues and now gave similar advice to younger, less experienced male colleagues in their schools. Lent classified access to mentors as an environmental support. This classification infers that the presence of trusted mentors might be an important influence on male primary teachers being able to cope with the gender related challenges they face, and continue teaching.

The presence of the social supports can positively contribute to male primary teachers' coping efficacy and outcomes expectations. Participants in this study did not directly link the supports identified above to their coping efficacy, yet it was clear that knowing they could rely on other male teachers, trusted female colleagues, and school leaders for support and understanding was an important aspect of their ability to cope with gender related challenges. All interview participants indicated that they could rely on at least one of these three support groups to positively influence their coping efficacy for dealing with gender related challenges. This finding supports Lent's (2012) beliefs that persistence is positively influenced by strong environmental supports. In conjunction with the successful use of coping strategies, the existence of these supports was a strong positive influence on participants' assessment of, and efficacy for coping with these challenges.

8.5 Suggestions for Future Practice

Being a male primary teacher is not an easy job. Yet, the participants in this study are passionate, functioning examples of men who are able to cope with the

gender related challenges they face to persist in the profession. Their motivations were similar to other male and female primary teachers identified in previous literature (e.g., Kane & Mallon, 2006; Skelton, 2009; Szwed, 2010). They all wanted to contribute to society and make a positive difference in children's lives. The preceding chapters documented numerous coping strategies that participants used to deal with the major gendered related challenges they faced. Some of these coping strategies could be viewed as dysfunctional actions that can exacerbate problems rather than help to solve them. Other male primary teachers could examine the functionality of their coping strategies before they enact them to ensure they are actually positively influencing their situation. Challenges surrounding physical contact, masculine roles and professional relationships have been identified by previous research (e.g., Burn & Pratt-Adams, 2015; Cushman, 2007; Smith, 2008) and therefore the functional strategies described previously might also assist other male primary teachers struggling to deal with them.

The support of school leaders and teaching colleagues is an important component of male primary teachers' abilities to cope with the gender related challenges they face in their profession. Male primary teachers might need to be proactive in developing positive relationships with these colleagues and school leaders, and identifying potential mentors they can learn from. This identification could be done through networking, a preparedness to ask for help, and a willingness to engage in situations such as professional learning conferences that could help cultivate these positive relationships. School leaders can facilitate the development of positive relationships within their staff through the creation and promotion of a supportive school environment. Participants in this study stated that they had

benefitted from the support of experienced female colleagues and school leaders, yet many participants specifically stated that their male mentors were their most influential support mechanism. Their positive influence was particularly important in situations involving fear and uncertainty surrounding physical contact. The personal experiences of these male mentors meant that they could suggest, and model, practical coping strategies that were specific to the gender related challenges participants were coping with. If schools do not have experienced male staff that can mentor younger male teachers they might need to support professional development for these new teachers. As stated previously, this could involve male teachers attending conferences to build local male teacher support networks, as well as soliciting the help of retired male primary teachers to act as mentors. The support these experienced mentors can provide might be vital to male primary teachers' ability, and efficacy, to enact coping strategies and persist within the profession.

Factors such as coping efficacy and outcomes expectations are developed within an individuals' unique social contexts (Lent, 2012). This statement suggests that the school environments in which male primary teachers work can influence these variables. Data from this study revealed that if schools wish to assist their male primary teachers cope with the gender related challenges they face and persist in the profession, then they need to create and promote a supportive environment that does not perpetuate traditional hegemonic constructions of masculinity. School leaders need to acknowledge the gender related challenges their male primary teachers might face and open professional dialogue with them about how they can support them to enact coping strategies. Future researchers could consider examining the influence of

principal support on male primary teachers' abilities to enact functional coping strategies to deal with the gender related challenges they face.

Schools might also need to be more aware that they are socialising their students to what is appropriate behaviour for men and women. If schools perpetuate and normalise a traditional hegemonic version of masculinity, they are likely to be contributing to the difficulty of being a male primary teacher. This contribution is likely to result in increasingly low numbers of male teachers in primary schools. Instead, school leaders could encourage their teachers to be agents of change (Cushman, 2010) by dividing roles and responsibilities in ways that challenge perceptions of what is appropriate behaviour for men and women. This division could be a catalyst for encouraging children to consider a greater range of potential futures. In time, these children could then help contest traditional societal constructions of gender and masculinity. How school leaders and female teachers can assist with ensuring traditional constructions of masculinity are not perpetuated within their schools could also be a focus of future research.

This study has attempted to address a gap in the male primary teacher literature by suggesting coping strategies and supports to assist these men deal with gender related challenges involving physical contact, masculine roles and professional relationships. Future research on male primary teachers could focus on identifying supports and coping strategies for all gender related challenges identified in previous literature. Lent et al. (2000) stated that a change in perspective, from deficits (challenges) to assets (supports and strategies) could have positive implications for people struggling with work related challenges. Challenges such as the potential for sexuality to be questioned, uncertainty about expectations of male teachers as role

models and discouragement from friends and family were all identified as moderate or critical challenges by some survey participants in this study. Men struggling with challenges that many of their male teaching colleagues do not find difficult might have even more difficulty dealing with challenges such as fear and uncertainty around physical contact. This situation might increase their risk of leaving the profession. The identification, development and implementation of strategies and support mechanisms to assist men to cope with these gender related challenges should be a key focus of future research on male primary teachers. This research could undertake longitudinal studies examining the experiences and retention of male primary teachers given specific professional learning around coping strategies for gender related challenges, and a control group that do not. Utilising more general coping literature (Carver, 1997; Carver & Connor-Smith, 2010; Cooper et al., 2008) to determine the functionality of these strategies should also be considered, as this extra layer of theory enhanced the analysis of the participant data in this study and could be used as a framework to build from in future studies.

Despite my noted limitations, I believe that a strength of my mixed methods approach was that I built upon the previously available qualitative research to develop a survey instrument to measure the gender related challenges for male primary teachers. Having reported strong validity and reliability on the small sample from this study, and from my pilot work (Cruickshank et al., 2015), I believe this tool should be used and tested across a broader sample of the population. Although I have only tested two samples using this tool, I would suggest future researchers interested in this area consider using a Likert scale with greater variability to more accurately measure male primary teachers' perceptions of the gender related challenges they face. It is

acknowledged that the addition of more items loading on each challenge might have also unearthed new themes and allowed for the research questions to be answered in greater depth. Potential examples could include items about making physical contact with students in specific locations such as the classroom or playground, and specific contexts such as first aid or physical demonstrations. Accompanying this change with a substantial increase in participant numbers should provide additional data so that more in depth quantitative analyses can be performed. While I have used quantitative data to construct interview questions, the next logical step for future research with greater participant numbers is to investigate significance of the demographic variables I have identified in this study. It would also be beneficial to make a minor change to the demographic section. Asking participants to type in their age, rather than select from a series of ten-year ranges would allow for more accurate reporting of participants' age mean and standard deviation. Moreover, rewording survey items such as the masculine roles item to ensure they are specifically focussed on the gender aspect of each challenge would make the gender focus of each item was more explicit.

Access to survey participants was a difficult task in this research project. The low participant numbers in the initial quantitative phase of this study were primarily due to the Department of Education (DoE) not giving approval for their employees to participate in this study because it did not align with their literacy and numeracy specific research interests. This was a limitation of this study. The DoE decision was disappointing in light of previous national and international data (e.g., Burn & Pratt-Adams, Cushman, 2007; Smith, 2008) detailing the low number of male primary teachers and the numerous gender related challenges they face. The DoE decision reduced my potential survey participant numbers as they employ over 70% of the male primary teachers working in Tasmania (ABS, 2016). The resultant participant

numbers limited my ability to perform more in depth data analysis using demographic variables and inferential statistics. To resolve this limitation I used a qualitative dominant mixed methods approach. This approach was well suited to examining the gender related challenges faced by male primary teachers. Due to the DoE's decision all participants were from Tasmanian non-government catholic and independent schools. The findings of this study might therefore not be reflective of, or relevant to male primary teachers working in government schools or locations outside of Tasmania. Although the quantitative phase was not the focus of this research, this does not mean it could not be the focus on future research with more participants. These increased participant numbers might allow for emergent challenges, supports and strategies to be better identified and explored. These emergent themes might also be identified through extending the Tasmanian context of this study to a larger national or international cohort of male primary teachers.

Interview participant selection was also a difficult task in this Tasmania focussed research project. At the end of the challenges survey, participants who self-nominated for the follow-up interview phase of the study were taken to a second survey (Appendix C) where they could give their contact details. Ensuring the anonymity of survey responses allowed me to gain ethical approval for this study, but did limit my ability to purposefully select interview participants as all data from the initial survey was non-identifiable. The secondary survey included questions about participants' age, experience and location, but I did not know other demographic information or the previous survey responses of potential interviewees. Therefore I did not know if the interview participants had given a variety of survey responses, or all responded in exactly the same way to each challenge. This situation did not allow

for the identification of participants that had provided noteworthy survey responses to be interviewed for elaboration. I was therefore unable to select participants from all demographic groups or different responses to the three main challenges identified in the survey data and Rasch analysis. It is possible that this might have restricted the variety in coping strategies I was able to identify for these challenges. Researchers using or adapting this survey instrument in future might need to better inform their ethics committee of the limitations this requirement can result in, and argue that all survey data needs to be identifiable.

Researchers seeking to answer other questions about male primary teachers could consider utilising SCCT (Lent et al., 1994). Lent et al. do not view gender as simply a factor to be categorised, rather SCCT is concerned with investigating the social effects of gender within work environments. This perspective aligns well with investigations of male primary teachers working in female dominated schools. Lent et al. proposed that people were more likely to persist in their profession if they experienced strong supports. The findings of this study supported this premise and identified relationships with colleagues and school leader as highly influential supports. As some challenges were identified by participants as strong, the importance of strong support strategies was even more critical to these men. Future research focussed on coping strategies could also consider measuring participants' coping efficacy. This measurement should involve the initial development and validation, or adaptation of an appropriate coping efficacy scale. This quantitative data could be compared to challenge perceptions to provide further supporting or disconfirming evidence that coping efficacy can moderate an individuals' perceptions of the challenges they face. If coping efficacy does have a strong moderating influence,

identifying and enacting strategies to increase male primary teachers' coping efficacy could lead to a decrease in the perceived difficulty of the gender related challenges they face. In time, this might result in more male primary teachers being able to deal with these challenges, and primary school classrooms becoming reflective of the more gender balanced communities in which they operate.

References

Addi-Raccah, A. (2005). Gender and teachers' attrition: The occupational destination of former teachers. *Sex Roles, 53*(9-10), 739-752.

Akerlind, G. (2008). Growing and developing as a university researcher. *Higher Education, 55*(2), 241-254.

Allan, J. (1993). Male elementary teachers: Experiences and perspectives. In C. Williams (Ed.), *Doing "women's work": Men in non-traditional occupations* (pp. 113-127). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Alloway, N. (1995). *The constructions of gender in early childhood*. Melbourne, VIC: Curriculum Corporation.

Anderson, J., & Pickeral, T. (2000). Challenges and strategies for success with service-learning in pre service teacher education. *NSEE Quarterly, 25*(3), 7-22.

Anliak, S., & Beyazkurk, D. (2008). Career perspectives of male students in early childhood education. *Educational Studies, 34*(4), 309-317.

Ashcraft, C., & Sevier, B. (2006). Gender will find a way: Exploring how male elementary teachers make sense of their experiences and responsibilities. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood, 7*(2), 130-145.

Ashiedu, J., & Scott-Ladd, B. (2012). Understanding teacher attraction and retention drivers: Addressing teacher shortages. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 37*(11), 17-35.

Ashley, M., & Lee, J. (2003). *Women teaching boys: Caring and working in the primary school*. Stoke on Trent, United Kingdom: Trentham Books.

Aspinwall, L., & Taylor, S. (1997). A stitch in time: Self-regulation and proactive coping. *Psychological Bulletin, 121*(3), 417-436.

Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2016). *Schools Australia series*. Canberra, Australia: Australian Bureau of Statistics.

Bai, L., Hudson, P., Millwater, J., & Tones, M. (2012). Development of a survey instrument to measure TEFL academics' perceptions about, individual and workplace characteristics for conducting research. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education, 36*(1), 52-66.

Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological review, 84*(2), 191-215.

Bandura, A. (1986). The explanatory and predictive scope of self-efficacy theory. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 4*(3), 359-373.

Bandura, A. (2001). Social cognitive theory: An agentic perspective. *Annual Review of Psychology, 52*(1), 1-26.

Baskin, B. (2014, January 22). Female teacher, 26, charged with having sex with special needs student, 15. *The Courier Mail*. http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/female-teacher-faces-charges-over-alleged-relationship-with-student/story-fnihsrf2-1226807115404

Berger, R. (2015). Now I see it, now I don't: Researcher's position and reflexivity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research, 15*(2), 219-234.

Bernard, J., Hill, D., Falter, P., & Wilson, W. (2004). *Narrowing the gender gap: Attracting men to teaching*. Toronto, ON: Ontario College of Teachers.

Bhana, D., & Moosa, S. (2016). Failing to attract males in foundation phase teaching: An issue of masculinities. *Gender and Education, 28*(1), 1-19.

Bond, T. (2003). Validity and assessment: A Rasch measurement perspective. *Metodologia de las Ciencias del Comportamiento, 5*(2), 179-194.

Bond, T., & Fox, C. (2007). *Applying the Rasch model: Fundamental measurement in the human sciences*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Bose, C. N., Bjorling, G., Elfstrom, M. L., Persson, H., & Saboonchi, F. (2015). Assessment of coping strategies and their associations with health related quality of life in patients with chronic heart failure: The brief COPE restructured. *Cardiology Research, 6*(2), 239-248.

Bradley, K., & Loadman, W. (2005). Urban secondary educators' views of teacher recruitment and retention. *NASSP Bulletin, 89*(644), 2-28.

Brown, K., & Schainker, S. (2008). Doing all the right things: Teacher retention issues. *Journal of Cases in Educational Leadership, 11*(1), 10-17.

Brown, K., & Wynn, S. (2009). Finding, supporting, and keeping: The role of the principal in teacher retention issues. *Leadership and Policy in Schools, 8*(1), 37-63.

Brown, S., Westbrook, R., & Challagalla, G. (2005). Good cope, bad cope: Adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies following a critical negative work event. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*(4), 792-798.

Brown, T. (2011). An examination of the construct validity of the Motor-Free Visual Perceptual Test -Third Edition (MVPT-3) using Rasch analysis with adult participants. *OTJR: Occupation, Participation and Health, 31*(2), 73-80.

Brownhill, S. (2014). ‘Build me a male role model!’ A critical exploration of the perceived qualities/characteristics of men in the early years (0–8) in England. *Gender and Education, 26*(3), 246-261.

Bryman, A. (2007). Barriers to integrating quantitative and qualitative research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 1*(1), 8-22.

Bullough, R. V. (2015). Differences? Similarities? Male teacher, female teacher: An instrumental case study of teaching in a Head Start classroom. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 47*(3), 13-21.

Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2013). 2013 BLS current population study. http://www.menteach.org/resources/data_about_men_teachers

Burn, E., & Pratt-Adams, S. (2015). *Men teaching children 3-11: Dismantling gender barriers*. London, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury.

Byars-Winston, A. M. (2006). Racial ideology in predicting social cognitive career variables for Black undergraduates. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 69*(1), 134-148.

Byars-Winston, A. M., & Fouad, N. A. (2008). Math and science social cognitive variables in college students’ contributions of contextual factors in predicting goals. *Journal of Career Assessment, 16*(4), 425-440.

Cameron, C., Moss, P., & Owen, C. (1999). *Men in the nursery*. London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Carrington, B. (2002). A quintessentially feminine domain? Student teachers’ constructions of primary teaching as a career. *Educational Studies, 28*(3), 289-305.

Carrington, B., Francis, B., Hutchings, M., Skelton, C., Read, B., & Hall, I. (2007). Does the gender of the teacher really matter? Seven- to eight-year-olds

accounts of their interactions with their teachers. *Educational Studies*, *33*(4), 397-415.

Carver, C., Scheier, M., & Weintraub, J. (1989). Assessing coping strategies: A theoretically based approach. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 56*(2), 267-283.

Carver, C. S. (1997). You want to measure coping but your protocol is too long: Consider the brief cope. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 4*(1), 92-100.

Carver, C. S., & Connor-Smith, J. (2010). Personality and coping. *Annual Review of Psychology, 61*, 679-704.

Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (2004). Self-regulation of action and affect. In R. Baumeister & K. Vohs (Eds.), *Handbook of self-regulation: Research, theory, and applications* (pp. 13-39). New York, NY: Guildford Press.

Catholic Education Brisbane. (2008). Code of conduct. https://brisbanecatholic.org.au/

Cavanagh, R., & Sparrow, L. (2010). *Measuring mathematics anxiety: Paper 2 - constructing and validating the measure*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education conference, Melbourne, Australia. http://www.aare.edu.au/10pap/2063CavanaghSparrow.pdf

Christian Schools Tasmania. (2015). Code of conduct. http://calvin.tas.edu.au/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/CST-Code-of-Conduct.pdf

Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education* (7th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Commonwealth of Australia. (1998). *A class act: Inquiry into the status of the teaching profession*. Canberra, ACT: Senate Employment, Education and Training References Committee.

Commonwealth of Australia. (2003). Australia's teachers: Australia's future. Canberra, ACT: Department of Education, Science and Training.

Connell, R. W. (2002). *Gender*. Cambridge, United Kingdom: Polity.

Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society, 19*(6), 829-859.

Cooney, M., & Bittner, M. (2001). Men in early childhood education: Their emergent issues. *Early Childhood Education Journal, 29*(2), 77-82.

Cooper, C., Katona, C., & Livingston, G. (2008). Validity and reliability of the brief COPE in carers of people with dementia: The LASER-AD Study. *The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 196*(11), 838-843.

Creswell, J., & Plano Clark, V. (2011). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Gutmann, M. L., & Hanson, W. E. (2003). Advanced mixed methods research designs. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 209-240). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cronbach, L. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. *Psychometrika, 16,* 297-334.

Cruickshank, V. (2012). *Why men choose to become primary teachers*. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, University of Sydney, Australia.

Cruickshank, V. (2014). Challenges faced by the male primary teacher: A literature review. In N. Fitzallen, R. Reaburn & F. Fan (Eds.), *The future of educational research: Perspectives from beginning researchers* (pp. 87-98). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense.

Cruickshank, V., Pedersen, S., Hill, A., & Callingham, R. (2015). Construction and validation of a survey instrument to determine the gender-related challenges faced by pre-service male primary teachers. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education, 38*(2), 184-199.

Cushman, P. (2000). Year 13 male students' attitudes to primary school teaching as a career. *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies, 35*(2), 223-230.

Cushman, P. (2005a). It's just not a real bloke's job: Male teachers in the primary school. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 33*(3), 321-338.

Cushman, P. (2005b). Let's hear it from the males: Issues facing male primary school teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 21*(3), 227-240.

Cushman, P. (2007). The male teacher shortage: A synthesis of research and worldwide strategies for addressing the shortage. *KEDI Journal of Educational Policy, 4*(1), 79-98.

Cushman, P. (2008). So what exactly do you want? What principals mean when they say 'male role model'. *Gender and Education, 20*(2), 123-136.

Cushman, P. (2010). Male primary school teachers: Helping or hindering a move to gender equity? *Teaching and Teacher Education, 26*(5), 1211-1218.

De Lisle, J. (2011). The benefits and challenges of mixing methods and methodologies: Lessons learnt from implementing qualitatively led mixed methods research designs in Trinidad and Tobago. *Caribbean Curriculum, 18*, 87-120.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Doron, J., Trouillet, R., Gana, K., Boiché, J., Neveu, D., & Ninot, G. (2014). Examination of the hierarchical structure of the Brief COPE in a French sample: Empirical and theoretical convergences. *Journal of Personality Assessment, 96*(5), 567-575.

Duffy, R. D., & Lent, R. W. (2009). Test of a social cognitive model of work satisfaction in teachers. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 75*(2), 212-223.

Early Childhood Council. (2013). Men in ECE. http://www.ecc.org.nz/Category?Action=View&Category_id=351

Eby, L. T., McManus, S. E., Simon, S. A., & Russell, J. E. (2000). The protégé's perspective regarding negative mentoring experiences: The development of a taxonomy. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 57*(1), 1-21.

Education Queensland. (2002). *Male teachers' strategy: Strategic plan for the attraction, recruitment and retention of male teachers in Queensland state schools 2002-2005*. Brisbane, QLD: Queensland Government.

Ewing, R., & Manuel, J. (2005). Retaining quality early career teachers in the profession. *Change: Transformations in Education, 8*(1), 1-16.

Fan, J. X., Brown, B. B., Hanson, H., Kowaleski-Jones, L., Smith, K. R., & Zick, C. D. (2013). Moderate to vigorous physical activity and weight outcomes: does every minute count? *American Journal of Health Promotion, 28*(1), 41-49.

Feilzer, M. Y. (2010). Doing mixed methods research pragmatically: Implications for the rediscovery of pragmatism as a research paradigm. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 4*(1), 6-16.

Fink, D. (2003). The law of unintended consequences: The 'real' cost of top-down reform. *Journal of Educational Change, 4*(2), 105-128.

Firdaus, A. (2006). Measuring service quality in higher education: three instruments compared. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, *29*(1), 71-89.

Fisher, W. (1994). The Rasch debate: Validity and revolution in educational measurement. In M. Wilson (Ed.), *Objective measurement Vol. 2* (pp. 36-72). Norwood, NJ: Ablex.

Fisher, L. D., Gushue, G. V., & Cerrone, M. T. (2011). The influences of career support and sexual identity on sexual minority women's career aspirations. *The Career Development Quarterly*, *59*(5), 441-454.

Flores, L. Y., Navarro, R. L., Smith, J. L., & Ploszaj, A. M. (2006). Testing a model of non-traditional career choice goals with Mexican American adolescent men. *Journal of Career Assessment*, *14*(2), 214-234.

Foley, C., & Murphy, M. (2015). Burnout in Irish teachers: Investigating the role of individual differences, work environment and coping factors. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 50*, 46-55.

Foster, T., & Newman, E. (2005). Just a knock back? Identity bruising on the route to becoming a male primary school teacher. *Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice*, *11*(4), 341-358.

Francis, B., & Skelton, C. (2001). Men teachers and the construction of heterosexual masculinity in the classroom. *Sex Education: Sexuality, Society and Learning, 1*(1), 9-21.

Francis, B., & Skelton, C. (2005). *Reassessing gender and achievement*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Freedman, E. (2002). *No turning back*. New York, NY: Ballantyne.

Galton, M., & MacBeath, J. (2010). Balancing the workload equation in English primary schools: A continuing story? *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 38*(4), 301-315.

General Teaching Council for England. (2010). Annual digest of statistics 2009-10. http://www.gtce.org.uk/documents/publicationpdfs/digest_of_statistics0910.pdf.

Gill, P., Stewart, K., Treasure, E., & Chadwick, B. (2008). Methods of data collection in qualitative research: Interviews and focus groups. *British Dental Journal, 204*(6), 291-295.

Godshalk, V. M., & Sosik, J. J. (2003). Aiming for career success: The role of learning goal orientation in mentoring relationships. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 63*(3), 417-437.

Gordon, J. (2000). *The colour of teaching*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge Palmer.

Gosse, D. (2011). Race, sexual orientation, culture and male teacher role models: "Will any teacher do as long as they are good?" *The Journal of Men's Studies, 19*(2), 116-137.

Government of New South Wales. (2015). Professional responsibilities. http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-us/careers-centre/school-careers/teaching/your-teaching-career/approved-teachers/casual-teacher-induction/professional-responsibilities

Government of South Australia. (2011). Protective practices. https://www.decd.sa.gov.au/doc/protective-practices-staff-their-interactions-children-and-young-people

Government of Western Australia. (2011). Code of conduct. http://www.det.wa.edu.au/policies/detcms/policy-planning-and-accountability/policies-framework/guidelines/code-of-conduct1.en?cat-id=3457094

Griffin, P. (2007). The comfort of competence and the uncertainty of assessment. *Studies in Educational Evaluation, 33*, 87-99.

Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, and emerging confluences. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 191-216). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Haggard, D. L., Dougherty, T. W., Turban, D. B., & Wilbanks, J. E. (2011). Who is a mentor? A review of evolving definitions and implications for research. *Journal of Management, 37*(1), 280-304.

Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1995). *Ethnography: Practices and principles*. New York: NY: Routledge.

Hanson, W. E., Creswell, J. W., Plano Clark, V. L., Petska, K. S., & Creswell, D. J. (2005). Mixed methods research designs in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counselling Psychology, 52*(2), 224-235.

Harrell, M. C., & Bradley, M. A. (2009). *Data collection methods: Semi-structured interviews and focus groups*. Arlington, VA: RAND.

Hastings, R. P., Kovshoff, H., Brown, T., Ward, N. J., Degli Espinosa, F., & Remington, B. (2005). Coping strategies in mothers and fathers of preschool and school-age children with autism. *Autism, 9*(4), 377-391.

Howe, K. R. (2004). A critique of experimentalism. *Qualitative Inquiry, 10*(1), 42-61.

Hutchings, M. (2005). *To what extent and in what ways do 7–8 year old girls and boys see their male and female teachers as role models?* Paper presented at

the British Educational Research Association Conference, University of Glamorgan.

Hutchings, M., Carrington, B., Francis, B., Skelton, C., Read, B., & Hall, I. (2008). Nice and kind, smart and funny: What children like and want to emulate in their teachers. *Oxford Review of Education, 34*(2), 135-157.

Igo, L. B., Kiewra, K. A., & Bruning, R. (2008). Individual differences and intervention flaws: A sequential explanatory study of college students' copy-and-paste note taking. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 2*(2), 149-168.

Ingersoll, R., & Smith, T. (2003). The wrong solution to the teacher shortage. *Educational Leadership, 60*(8), 30-33.

Ivankova, N. V., & Stick, S. L. (2007). Students' persistence in a distributed doctoral program in educational leadership in higher education: A mixed methods study. *Research in Higher Education, 48*(1), 93-135.

Johnson, R. B., Onwuegbuzie, A. J., & Turner, L. A. (2007). Toward a definition of mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Rresearch, 1*(2), 112-133.

Johnson, S. (2008). The status of male teacher in public education today. *Education Policy, 6*(4), 1-12.

Jones, D. (2006). The "right kind of man": The ambiguities of regendering the key stage one environment. *Sex Education, 6*(1), 61-76.

Jones, D. (2007). Millennium man: Constructing identities of male teachers in early year's contexts. *Educational Review, 59*(2), 179-194.

Julian, P. W. (2011). *Perceptions of nursing as a career option held by men with experiences in military health care.* (Doctoral Thesis), East Carolina University, Greenville, NC.

Kane, R., & Mallon, M. (2006). Perceptions of teachers and teaching. http://www.educationcounts.govt.nz/publications/ece/perceptions-of-teachers-and-teaching-a-focus-on-early-childhood-education/bibliography.

Kauppinen-Toropainen, K., & Lammi, J. (1993). Men in female-dominated occupations: A cross-cultural comparison. In C. Williams (Ed.), *Doing women's work: Men in non-traditional occupations* (pp. 91-112). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Keverline, S. (2003). *Women's persistence in non-traditional occupations: A study of federal law enforcement.* (Doctoral Thesis), George Washington University, Washington, DC.

Killlick, D. (2016, May 12). Sex with schoolboys lands Tasmanian teacher Casey Lee Sullivan in jail. *The Mercury*. http://www.themercury.com.au/news/scales-of-justice/sex-with-schoolboys-lands-tasmanian-teacher-casey-lee-sullivan-in-jail/news-story/4e2eb55e6ea44fa4a3c273c3c8a2b056

King, J. R. (2000). The problem(s) of men in early education. In N. Lesko (Ed.), *Masculinities at school* (pp. 3-26). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kvale, S., & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kyriacou, C., Kunc, R., Stephens, P., & Hultgren, A. (2003). Student teachers' expectations of teaching as a career in England and Norway. *Educational Review, 55*(3), 255-263.

Lazarus, R. (2006). Emotions and interpersonal relationships: Toward a person-centred conceptualization of emotions and coping. *Journal of Personality, 74*(1), 9-46.

Leggo, C. (2008). Narrative inquiry: Attending to the art of discourse. *Language and Literacy, 10*(1), 1-22.

Lent, R. W. (2012). Social cognitive career theory. In S. D. Brown & R. W. Lent (Eds.), *Career development and counseling: Putting theory and research to work* (2nd ed., pp. 115-146). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.

Lent, R. W., & Brown, S. D. (2006). Integrating person and situation perspectives on work satisfaction: A social-cognitive view. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 69*(2), 236-247.

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., Brenner, B., Chopra, S. B., Davis, T., Talleyrand, R., & Suthakaran, V. (2001). The role of contextual supports and barriers in the choice of math/science educational options: A test of social cognitive hypotheses. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 48*(4), 474-483.

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (1994). Toward a unifying social cognitive theory of career and academic interest, choice, and performance. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 45*(1), 79-122.

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., & Hackett, G. (2000). Contextual supports and barriers to career choice: A social cognitive analysis. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 47*(1), 36-49.

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., Sheu, H.-B., Schmidt, J., Brenner, B. R., Gloster, C. S., Wilkins, G., Schmidt, L., Lyons, H., & Treistman, D. (2005). Social cognitive predictors of academic interests and goals in engineering: Utility for women and students at historically black universities. *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 52*(1), 84-92.

Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., Talleyrand, R., McPartland, E. B., Davis, T., Chopra, S., Alexander, M., Suthakaran, V., & Chai, C. (2002). Career choice barriers,

supports, and coping strategies: College students' experiences. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 60*(1), 61-72.

Lent, R. W., Nota, L., Soresi, S., Ginevra, M. C., Duffy, R. D., & Brown, S. D. (2011). Predicting the job and life satisfaction of Italian teachers: Test of a social cognitive model. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 79*(1), 91-97.

Lent, R. W., Singley, D., Sheu, H.-B., Schmidt, J. A., & Schmidt, L. C. (2007). Relation of social-cognitive factors to academic satisfaction in engineering students. *Journal of Career Assessment, 15*(1), 87-97.

Lewis, E., Butcher, J., & Donnan, P. (1999). *Men in primary teaching: An endangered species?* Paper presented at the AARE-NZARE Conference, Melbourne. http://www.aare.edu.au/99pap/but99238.htm.

Linacre, J. (2012). *WINSTEPS Rasch measurement computer program (Version 3.75).* Chicago, IL: Winsteps.com.

Lindley, L. D. (2005). Perceived barriers to career development in the context of social cognitive career theory. *Journal of Career Assessment, 13*(3), 271-287.

Luzzo, D. A., & McWhirter, E. H. (2001). Sex and ethnic differences in the perception of educational and career related barriers and levels of coping efficacy. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 79*(1), 61-67.

Martin, A., & Marsh, H. (2005). Motivating boys and motivating girls: Does teacher gender really make a difference? *Australian Journal of Education, 49*(3), 320-334.

Martino, W. (2008). Male teachers as role models: Addressing issues of masculinity, pedagogy and the re-masculinisation of schooling. *Curriculum Inquiry, 38*(2), 189-223.

Mason, J. (2006). Mixing methods in a qualitatively driven way. *Qualitative Research, 6*(1), 9-25.

Masters, G. (1982). A Rasch model for partial credit scoring. *Psychometrika, 47*(2), 149-174.

Mau, W.-C. J., & Mau, Y.-H. (2006). Factors influencing high school students to persist in aspirations of teaching careers. *Journal of Career Development, 32*(3), 234-249.

McGrath, K., & Sinclair, M. (2013). More male primary-school teachers? Social benefits for boys and girls. *Gender and Education, 25*(5), 531-547.

McKenzie, P., Rowley, G., Weldon, P., & Murphy, M. (2012). Staff in Australia's schools 2010. Canberra, ACT: Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Mills, M., Haase, M., & Charlton, E. (2008). Being the 'right' kind of male teacher: The disciplining of John. *Pedagogy, Culture and Society, 16*(1), 71-84.

Mills, M., Martino, W., & Lingard, B. (2004). Attracting, recruiting and retaining male teachers: Policy issues in the male teacher debate. *British Journal of the Sociology of Education, 25*(3), 355-369.

Mistry, M., & Sood, K. (2015). Why are there still so few men within Early Years in primary schools: views from male trainee teachers and male leaders? *Education 3-13, 43*(2), 115-127.

Moss-Racusin, C. A., & Johnson, E. R. (2016). Backlash against male elementary educators. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 46*(7), 379-393.

Moyles, J., & Cavendish, S. (2001). *Male students in primary ITT: A failure to thrive, strive or survive?* Paper presented at the British Educational Research

Association annual conference, University of Leeds. http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/00001908.htm.

Mruck, K., & Mey, G. (2007). Grounded theory and reflexivity. In A. Bryant & K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of grounded theory* (pp. 515-538). London, United Kingdom: Sage.

Mulholland, J., & Hansen, P. (2003). Men who become primary school teachers: An early portrait. *Asia-Pacific Journal of Teacher Education, 31*(3), 213-224.

Muncey, T. (2010). *Creating auto ethnographies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Najmi, S., & Wegner, D. (2008). Thought suppression and psychopathology. In A. Elliot (Ed.), *Handbook of approach and avoidance motivation* (pp. 447-459). Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.

Naylor, C., & Malcolmson, J. (2001). *I love teaching English, but...: A study of the workload of English teachers in BC secondary grades*. Vancouver, BC: BC Teachers' Federation.

Northern Territory Government. (2011). Protective practices. http://www.trb.nt.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/40916/TRB-NT-Protective-Practices-.pdf

Nunnally, J. (1978). *Psychometric theory* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

Oetting, R. (2008). *Effects of supports and barriers on choice intentions and actions of undergraduate pre-medicine students.* (Doctoral Thesis), Purdue, West Lafayette, IN.

Oh, H., Seo, D., & Kozub, F. (2010). The emotional reactions to challenging behavior scale-Korean (ERCBS-K): Modification and validation. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, *27*(1), 17-31.

Olding, R. (2013, September 16). 'Attractive' female PE teacher had sex with student. *Sydney Morning Herald*. http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/attractive-female-pe-teacher-had-sex-with-student-court-20130916-2turh.html#ixzz4DasFuf2p

Ontario College of Teachers. (2004). Narrowing the gender gap: Attracting men to teaching. http://www.oct.ca/~/media/PDF/Attracting%20Men%20To%20Teaching/EN/Men_In_Teaching_e.ashx

Perrone, K. M., Civiletto, C. L., Webb, L. K., & Fitch, J. C. (2004). Perceived barriers to and supports of the attainment of career and family goals among academically talented individuals. *International Journal of Stress Management, 11*(2), 114-131.

Petersen, N. (2014). The 'good', the 'bad' and the 'ugly'? Views on male teachers in foundation phase education. *South African Journal of Education, 34*(1), 1-13.

Postholm, M. B. (2008). Teachers developing practice: Reflection as key activity. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 24*(7), 1717-1728.

Rasch, G. (1960). *Probabilistic models for some intelligence and attainment tests.* Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Rentzou, K. (2016). Mapping gender segregation in pre-primary and primary education in Cyprus. *The Journal of Men's Studies, 24*(1), 1-22.

Riessman, C. K., & Quinney, L. (2005). Narrative in social work a critical review. *Qualitative Social Work, 4*(4), 391-412.

Robison, T. (2016). Male elementary general music teachers A phenomenological study. *Journal of Music Teacher Education, 25*(2), 1-13.

Roulston, K., & Mills, M. (2000). Male teachers in feminised teaching areas: marching to the beat of the men's movement drums? *Oxford Review of Education, 26*(2), 221-237.

Saifuddin, S. M., Dyke, L. S., & Rasouli, M. (2013). Gender and careers: A study of persistence in engineering education in Bangladesh. *Gender in Management: An International Journal, 28*(4), 188-209.

Sargent, P. (2000). Real men or real teachers? *Men and Masculinities, 2*(4), 410-433.

Schaefers, K. G., Epperson, D. L., & Nauta, M. M. (1997). Women's career development: Can theoretically derived variables predict persistence in engineering majors? *Journal of Counseling Psychology, 44*(2), 173-183.

Shaw, G. (1903). *Man & superman*. New York, NY: Viking Penguin.

Sheu, H.-B., Lent, R. W., Brown, S. D., Miller, M. J., Hennessy, K. D., & Duffy, R. D. (2010). Testing the choice model of social cognitive career theory across Holland themes: A meta-analytic path analysis. *Journal of Vocational Behavior, 76*(2), 252-264.

Skelton, C. (2009). Failing to get men into primary teaching: A feminist critique. *Journal of Education Policy, 24*(1), 39-54.

Skelton, C. (2011). Men teachers and the 'feminised' primary school: A review of the literature. *Educational Review, 64*(1), 1-19.

Smedley, S. (2007). Learning to be a primary school teacher: Reading one man's story. *Gender and Education, 19*(3), 369-385.

Smith, J. (2008). *The experience of crossing over into pink collar work*. Saarbrucken, Germany: VDM Verlag Dr Muller.

Soldner, M., Rowan-Kenyon, H., Inkelas, K. K., Garvey, J., & Robbins, C. (2012). Supporting students' intentions to persist in STEM disciplines: The role of

living-learning programs among other social-cognitive factors. *The Journal of Higher Education, 83*(3), 311-336.

Sonnentag, S. (2005). Burnout research: Adding an off work and day level perspective. *Work and Stress, 19*(3), 271-273.

Stanley, L., & Wise, S. (1983). *Breaking out: Feminist consciousness and feminist research*. London, United Kingdom: Routledge.

Sumsion, J. (2000). Negotiating otherness: A male early childhood educator's gender positioning. *International Journal of Early Years Education, 8*(2), 129-140.

Swanson, J. L., & Woitke, M. B. (1997). Theory into practice in career assessment for women: Assessment and interventions regarding perceived career barriers. *Journal of Career Assessment, 5*(4), 443-462.

Szwed, C. (2010). Gender balance in primary initial teacher education: Some current perspectives. *Journal of Education for Teaching, 36*(3), 303-317.

Tashakkori, A., & Teddlie, C. (2010). *Handbook of mixed methods in social & behavioral research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission. (2007). Code of conduct. http://catholic.tas.edu.au/key-documents/code-of-conduct

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2011). Mixed methods research: Contemporary issues in an emerging field. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed., pp. 285-300). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Thackeray, R., & Neiger, B. L. (2004). Misconceptions of focus groups: Implications for health education practice. *American Journal of Health Education, 35*(4), 214-219.

Thornton, M., & Bricheno, P. (2006). *Missing men in education*. Stoke on Trent, United Kingdom: Trentham Books.

Thornton, M., & Bricheno, P. (2008). Entrances and exits: Changing perceptions of primary teaching as a career for men. *Early Child Development and Care, 178*(7), 717-731.

Timms, C., Graham, D., & Cottrell, D. (2007). "I just want to teach" Queensland independent school teachers and their workload. *Journal of Educational Administration, 45*(5), 569-586.

Trent, J. (2015). The gendered, hierarchical construction of teacher identities: exploring the male primary school teacher voice in Hong Kong. *Journal of Education Policy, 30*(4), 500-517.

Walker, S., Reid, S., & Priest, H. (2013). Use of reflexivity in a mixed-methods study. *Nurse Researcher, 20*(3), 38-43.

Waller, W. (1932). *The sociology of teaching*. London, United Kingdom: Wiley.

Walter, M. (2010). *Social research methods* (2nd ed.). South Melbourne, VIC: Oxford.

Wang, T. L., & Berlin, D. (2010). Construction and validation of an instrument to measure Taiwanese elementary students' attitudes toward their science class. *International Journal of Science Education, 32*(18), 2413-2428.

Webster, L., & Mertova, P. (2007). *Using narrative inquiry as a research method: An introduction to using critical event narrative analysis in research on learning and teaching*. Abington, United Kingdom: Routledge.

West, P. (2004). *'Let's play a game of footy, Sir': Boys' difficulties and the link with male teachers*. Paper presented at the Senate Committee Inquiry into the Sex Discrimination Amendment (Teaching Profession) Bill 2004, Canberra, ACT.

White, S. (2011). Dads as teachers: Exploring duality of roles in the New Zealand context. *The Journal of Men's Studies, 19*(2), 173-186.

Wood, T. D. (2012). Teacher perceptions of gender-based differences among elementary school teachers. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education, 4*(2), 317-345.

Wright, B., & Masters, G. (1982). *Rating scale analysis*. Chicago, IL: MESA Press.

Yanchar, S. C., & Williams, D. D. (2006). Reconsidering the compatibility thesis and eclecticism: Five proposed guidelines for method use. *Educational Researcher, 35*(9), 3-12.

Appendix A

Pre-Service Male Primary Teacher Pilot Survey

Introduction

Thank you for accessing this survey. You have been selected to participate in this survey because you are a pre-service male primary classroom teacher.

This survey consists of two sections: (A) challenges you may face during your university study (8 questions), and (B) challenges you may face on your professional experiences in schools (12 questions).

You will be asked to tick a box to rate the challenges in each section from your perspective as a pre-service male primary school classroom teacher. The Likert scale will consist of the following ratings:

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Depending how you rate each challenge, you may be asked to give detail of your strategies for overcoming the challenge.

If you rate the challenge as a one, two or three; you will be asked to tick a box indicating which strategies you use to overcome this challenge. If you answer zero; you will proceed directly to the next challenge. You may tick multiple boxes to reflect numerous strategies that apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the “Other” text boxes that follow.

You will also have the opportunity to add up to three (3) further challenges in each section that are not already listed in the survey.

This survey will take 10-15 minutes to complete.

This survey is part of a pilot study and will be adapted for a larger study involving practising male primary classroom teachers. At end of this survey you will be given the opportunity to comment on the survey and also suggest any changes you think should be made.

Consent to Participate

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this project.

2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.

3. I understand that the study involves filling in a 10-15 minute online survey.

4. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for five years and will then be destroyed.

5. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

6. I agree that research data gathered from me for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant.

7. I understand that the researchers will maintain my identity confidential and that any information I supply to the researcher(s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.

8. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect.
9. I understand that if I tick the below consent box, this will be in substitute of a signed copy of the consent form. I am not giving up my legal rights by ticking the consent box.

10. I understand that the study will be conducted in accordance with the latest versions of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007* and applicable privacy laws. Individual results will be unidentifiable in any reports.

I wish to take part in this study (select from the below boxes)

- ○ I agree and consent to participate in the study
- ○ I do not agree and consent to participate in the study

<u>Demographic Questions</u>

Q1
Please indicate which year of your Bachelor of Education you are currently in.

- ○ Year 1
- ○ Year 2
- ○ Year 3
- ○ Year 4

Q2
Please indicate your current age.

Question Set A

As a pre-service male primary school classroom teacher have you experienced any gender related challenges during your professional experiences in regards to:

Q3a

Uncertainty surrounding making physical contact with students

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q3b

Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Requesting a male colleague teacher for your professional experience placement
- Requesting a professional experience placement at a school with at least one male primary classroom teacher (not necessarily your colleague teacher)
- Requesting professional experience placement with another male pre-service teacher
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) from the media
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q4a

Difficulties with colleague teachers in regards to your gender

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q4b

Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Requesting a male colleague teacher for your professional experience placement
- Requesting a professional experience placement at a school with at least one male primary classroom teacher (not necessarily your colleague teacher)
- Requesting professional experience placement with another male pre-service teacher
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) from the media
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q5a

Difficulties with other teachers at professional experience schools in regards to your gender

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q5b

Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Requesting a male colleague teacher for your professional experience placement
- Requesting a professional experience placement at a school with at least one male primary classroom teacher (not necessarily your colleague teacher)
- Requesting professional experience placement with another male pre-service teacher
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) from the media
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q6a
Difficulties with school parents in regards to your gender

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q6b
Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Requesting a male colleague teacher for your professional experience placement
- Requesting a professional experience placement at a school with at least one male primary classroom teacher (not necessarily your colleague teacher)
- Requesting professional experience placement with another male pre-service teacher
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) from the media
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q7a
Uncertainty about potential expectations of male teachers being role models involves

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q7b

Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Requesting a male colleague teacher for your professional experience placement
- Requesting a professional experience placement at a school with at least one male primary classroom teacher (not necessarily your colleague teacher)
- Requesting professional experience placement with another male pre-service teacher
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) from the media
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q8a

Have you faced any other gender related challenges during your professional experience placements?

If so, please click on the text box to described <u>one</u> challenge
You will have two (2) more opportunities to add challenges (in questions 9 and 10).

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q8b

Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Requesting a male colleague teacher for your professional experience placement
- Requesting a professional experience placement at a school with at least one male primary classroom teacher (not necessarily your colleague teacher)
- Requesting professional experience placement with another male pre-service teacher
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) from the media
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q9a

Have you faced any other gender related challenges on your professional experiences?

If so, please click on the text box to described <u>one</u> challenge
You will have one (1) more opportunities to add challenges (in question 10).

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q9b
Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.
- Requesting a male colleague teacher for your professional experience placement
- Requesting a professional experience placement at a school with at least one male primary classroom teacher (not necessarily your colleague teacher)
- Requesting professional experience placement with another male pre-service teacher
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) from the media
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q10a
Have you faced any other gender related challenges on your professional experiences?

If so, please click on the text box to described <u>one</u> challenge

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q10b
Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Requesting a male colleague teacher for your professional experience placement
- Requesting a professional experience placement at a school with at least one male primary classroom teacher (not necessarily your colleague teacher)
- Requesting professional experience placement with another male pre-service teacher
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) from the media
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

<u>Question Set B</u>

<u>As a male Bachelor of Education (Primary) student have you experienced any gender related challenges during your university study in regards to:</u>

Q11a

University work (e.g., lesson planning, academic writing, academic language)

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q11b

Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) in the media
- Being able to choose from more gender relevant electives (design and technology, physical education etc) during my university course
- Requesting to be grouped with other males in tutorial groups to reduce isolation
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q12a

Discouragement from your family about training to be a primary school teacher

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q12b

Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) in the media

- Being able to choose from more gender relevant electives (design and technology, physical education etc) during my university course
- Requesting to be grouped with other males in tutorial groups to reduce isolation
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q13a
Discouragement from your family about training to be a primary school teacher

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q13b
Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) in the media
- Being able to choose from more gender relevant electives (design and technology, physical education etc) during my university course
- Requesting to be grouped with other males in tutorial groups to reduce isolation
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q14a
Discouragement from your former high school/college teachers about training to be a primary school teacher

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q14b

Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) in the media
- Being able to choose from more gender relevant electives (design and technology, physical education etc) during my university course
- Requesting to be grouped with other males in tutorial groups to reduce isolation
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q15a

Being discouraged by perceptions of male primary teachers in society/media

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q15b

Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) in the media
- Being able to choose from more gender relevant electives (design and technology, physical education etc) during my university course
- Requesting to be grouped with other males in tutorial groups to reduce isolation
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q16a
The potential for your motives and sexuality to be questioned

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q16b
Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) in the media
- Being able to choose from more gender relevant electives (design and technology, physical education etc) during my university course
- Requesting to be grouped with other males in tutorial groups to reduce isolation
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q17a
Feeling isolated in typically female dominated lectures and tutorials

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q17b
Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) in the media
- Being able to choose from more gender relevant electives (design and technology, physical education etc) during my university course

- Requesting to be grouped with other males in tutorial groups to reduce isolation
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q18a
Dealing with issues of masculinity as you approach working in a profession that is numerically dominated by women

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q18b
Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) in the media
- Being able to choose from more gender relevant electives (design and technology, physical education etc) during my university course
- Requesting to be grouped with other males in tutorial groups to reduce isolation
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q19a
Not being comfortable/not knowing who to ask for help in regards to gender related issues

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q19b

Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) in the media
- Being able to choose from more gender relevant electives (design and technology, physical education etc) during my university course
- Requesting to be grouped with other males in tutorial groups to reduce isolation
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q20a

Have you faced any other gender related challenges on your university study?

If so, please click on the text box to described <u>one</u> challenge
You will have two (2) more opportunities to add challenges (in questions 21 and 22).

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q20b

Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) in the media
- Being able to choose from more gender relevant electives (design and technology, physical education etc) during my university course
- Requesting to be grouped with other males in tutorial groups to reduce isolation
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)

- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q21a

Have you faced any other gender related challenges on your university study?

If so, please click on the text box to described <u>one</u> challenge
You will have one (1) more opportunities to add challenges (in question 22).

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q21b
Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) in the media
- Being able to choose from more gender relevant electives (design and technology, physical education etc) during my university course
- Requesting to be grouped with other males in tutorial groups to reduce isolation
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Q22a

Have you faced any other gender related challenges on your university study?

If so, please click on the text box to described <u>one</u> challenge

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Q22b

Do you use any of the following strategies to overcome this challenge? If so, tick the appropriate box. You can tick as many boxes as apply to your situation, or you can create your own strategies (up to three) in the "Other" text boxes.

- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with experienced male primary school teachers
- Engaging in informal question and answer sessions with male university lecturers
- Sharing positive stories about teachers (particularly male) in the media
- Being able to choose from more gender relevant electives (design and technology, physical education etc) during my university course
- Requesting to be grouped with other males in tutorial groups to reduce isolation
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- Other (please click on the text box to type your strategy)
- I do not have a strategy for this challenge

Feedback

This survey will be adapted for a study involving practising male primary classroom teachers.
Your answer for this question will be considered when designing the adapted survey.
Please comment on:
- How easy you could understand the questions/answers in this survey
- Any changes you think should be made to this survey
- Any other comments you wish to add

Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Appendix B

Male Primary Teacher Survey

Introduction

Thank you for accessing this survey.

You have been selected to participate in this survey because you are a male teacher working within a Tasmanian primary school.

This survey consists of two sections and will take 15-20 minutes to complete.

Section A includes 11 demographic questions to help us categorise the data.

Section B includes 9 questions on the challenges that males teaching in a primary school environment may face. First, you will be asked to rate how several potential challenges, drawn from journal articles and books published in this field of research during the last twenty years, affect you in your teaching environment using the following scale:

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Next, you will be asked to indicate your strategic approach for addressing these challenges. You then have the opportunity to elaborate on your strategies if you wish. As this is an exploratory study, we appreciate your detailed responses in this section. Finally, you will be allowed to provide any further challenges that you may experience as a male in your teaching environment that are not presented in section B.

At end of this survey you will be given the opportunity to include contact details if you wish to be considered as an interview participant for the second part of this study.

It is important that you understand that your involvement is this study is voluntary and anonymous. While we would be pleased to have you participate, we respect your right to decline. If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation.

Once again thanks for participating in our research project. If you have any questions please email the research team at one of the following:

Vaughan.Cruickshank@utas.edu.au, Scott.Pedersen@utas.edu.au,
Allen.Hill@utas.edu.au

Consent to Participate

1. I have read and understood the 'Information Sheet' for this project.

2. The nature and possible effects of the study have been explained to me.

3. I understand that the study involves filling in a 15 minute online survey.

4. I understand that all research data will be securely stored on the University of Tasmania premises for five years and will then be destroyed.

5. Any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

6. I agree that research data gathered from me for the study may be published provided that I cannot be identified as a participant.

7. I understand that the researchers will maintain my identity confidential and that any information I supply to the researcher(s) will be used only for the purposes of the research.

8. I agree to participate in this investigation and understand that I may withdraw at any time without any effect.

9. I understand that if I tick the below consent box, this will be in substitute of a signed copy of the consent form. I am not giving up my legal rights by ticking the consent box.

10. I understand that the study will be conducted in accordance with the latest versions of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research 2007* and applicable privacy laws. Individual results will be unidentifiable in any reports.

I wish to take part in this study (select from the below boxes)

- ○ I agree and consent to participate in the study
- ○ I do not agree and consent to participate in the study *(Skip logic takes participants to Q26b)*

Question Set A
Demographics
Q1 What is your age?

- ○ 21-30

- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61+

Q2

How many years teaching experience do you have?

- 0-5
- 6-10
- 11-15
- 16-20
- 21+

Q3

What grades have you taught? (Select all that apply)

- Kinder
- Prep
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 3
- Grade 4
- Grade 5
- Grade 6

Q4

What kind of school do you presently work in?

- Government Primary School
- Government District High School
- Non-Government Primary School

Q5

Please specify your current teaching position

- Classroom Teacher
- Specialist Teacher (Please specify subject)

- Leadership Position (Principal, Assistant Principal, Advanced Skills Teacher; or equivalent (Please specify)

- Other / A combination of the above (Please specify)

Q6

How many male teachers does your primary school have (combination of all categories from previous question)?

Q7

What is the population of the city/town in which your school is located?

- 100,000 or More
- 50,000 - 99,999
- 20,000 - 49,999
- 10,000 - 19,999
- 5,000 - 9,999
- 1,000 - 4,999
- 500 - 999
- 200 - 499
- 199 or Less

Q8

What gender is your school Principal?

- Male
- Female

Q9

Do you have children?

- Yes
- No

Q10a

Is teaching your first career?

- Yes
- No

Q10b

Please list your previous career(s).

Q11

What has encouraged/motivated you to be a primary school teacher?

Question Set B

As a male primary school classroom teacher have you experienced any gender related challenges in regards to:

Q12

Uncertainty surrounding making physical contact with students

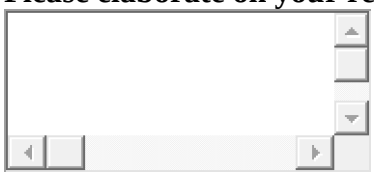
0 1 2 3

Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Please tick the appropriate box to detail how you deal with this challenge.

- This is not a challenge for me (*Display logic ensures the next question they receive is 12a*)
- This is a challenge for me but I do not have a strategy to overcome it (*12b*)
- This is a challenge for me and I have a strategy to overcome it (*12c*)

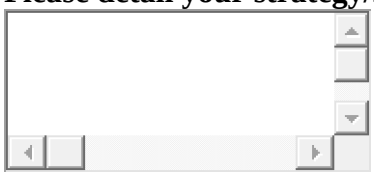
12a
Please elaborate on your response as to why this is not a challenge for you.



12b
Are you interested in developing a strategy for this challenge? Please elaborate on your response.

- **Yes**
- **No**

12c
Please detail your strategy/strategies for overcoming this challenge.



Q13
Uncertainty about expectations of male teachers as role models

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Please tick the appropriate box to detail how you deal with this challenge.

- This is not a challenge for me (*Display logic ensures the next question they receive is 13a*)
- This is a challenge for me but I do not have a strategy to overcome it (*13b*)
- This is a challenge for me and I have a strategy to overcome it (*13c*)

13a
Please elaborate on your response as to why this is not a challenge for you.

13b
Are you interested in developing a strategy for this challenge? Please elaborate on your response.

- **Yes**
- **No**

13c
Please detail your strategy/strategies for overcoming this challenge.

Q14
Discouragement from your family about being a primary school teacher

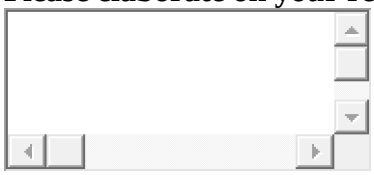
0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Please tick the appropriate box to detail how you deal with this challenge.

- This is not a challenge for me (*Display logic ensures the next question they receive is 14a*)
- This is a challenge for me but I do not have a strategy to overcome it (*14b*)

- This is a challenge for me and I have a strategy to overcome it (*14c*)

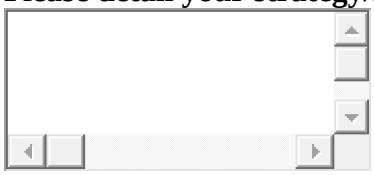
14a
Please elaborate on your response as to why this is not a challenge for you.



14b
Are you interested in developing a strategy for this challenge? Please elaborate on your response.

- **Yes**
- **No**

14c
Please detail your strategy/strategies for overcoming this challenge.



Q15
Discouragement from your friends about being a primary school teacher

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Please tick the appropriate box to detail how you deal with this challenge.

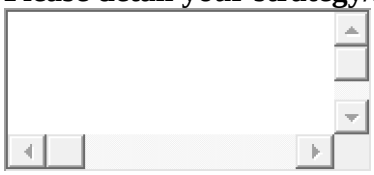
- This is not a challenge for me (*Display logic ensures the next question they receive is 15a*)
- This is a challenge for me but I do not have a strategy to overcome it (*15b*)
- This is a challenge for me and I have a strategy to overcome it (*15c*)

15a
Please elaborate on your response as to why this is not a challenge for you.

15b
Are you interested in developing a strategy for this challenge? Please elaborate on your response.

- **Yes**
- **No**

15c
Please detail your strategy/strategies for overcoming this challenge.



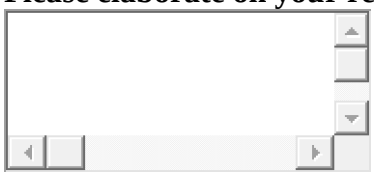
Q16
Discouragement from perceptions of male primary teachers in society/media

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Please tick the appropriate box to detail how you deal with this challenge.

- This is not a challenge for me (*Display logic ensures the next question they receive is 16a*)
- This is a challenge for me but I do not have a strategy to overcome it (*16b*)
- This is a challenge for me and I have a strategy to overcome it (*16c*)

16a
Please elaborate on your response as to why this is not a challenge for you.



16b
Are you interested in developing a strategy for this challenge? Please elaborate on your response.

- **Yes**
- **No**

16c
Please detail your strategy/strategies for overcoming this challenge.

Q17
The potential for your sexuality to be questioned

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Please tick the appropriate box to detail how you deal with this challenge.

- This is not a challenge for me (*Display logic ensures the next question they receive is 17a*)
- This is a challenge for me but I do not have a strategy to overcome it (*17b*)
- This is a challenge for me and I have a strategy to overcome it (*17c*)

17a
Please elaborate on your response as to why this is not a challenge for you.

17b
Are you interested in developing a strategy for this challenge? Please elaborate on your response.

- **Yes**

- **No**

17c
Please detail your strategy/strategies for overcoming this challenge

Q18
Being discouraged by dissatisfaction with teacher salaries

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Please tick the appropriate box to detail how you deal with this challenge.

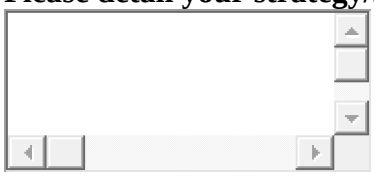
- This is not a challenge for me (*Display logic ensures the next question they receive is 18a*)
- This is a challenge for me but I do not have a strategy to overcome it (*18b*)
- This is a challenge for me and I have a strategy to overcome it (*18c*)

18a
Please elaborate on your response as to why this is not a challenge for you.

18b
Are you interested in developing a strategy for this challenge? Please elaborate on your response.

- **Yes**
- **No**

18c
Please detail your strategy/strategies for overcoming this challenge.



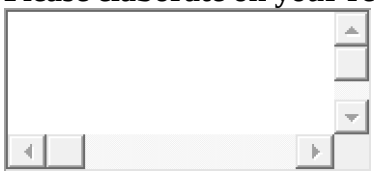
Q19
Feeling isolated in typically female dominated schools

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Please tick the appropriate box to detail how you deal with this challenge.

- This is not a challenge for me (*Display logic ensures the next question they receive is 19a*)
- This is a challenge for me but I do not have a strategy to overcome it (*19b*)
- This is a challenge for me and I have a strategy to overcome it (*19c*)

19a
Please elaborate on your response as to why this is not a challenge for you.



19b
Are you interested in developing a strategy for this challenge? Please elaborate on your response.

- **Yes**
- **No**

19c
Please detail your strategy/strategies for overcoming this challenge.

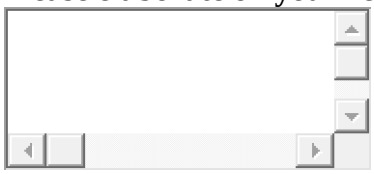
Q20
Dealing with workload issues due to expectations to fulfil 'additional roles' such as coaching sports teams, handling discipline issues and assisting with physical jobs, attending camps and excursions

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Please tick the appropriate box to detail how you deal with this challenge.

- This is not a challenge for me (*Display logic ensures the next question they receive is 20a*)
- This is a challenge for me but I do not have a strategy to overcome it (*20b*)
- This is a challenge for me and I have a strategy to overcome it (*20c*)

20a
Please elaborate on your response as to why this is not a challenge for you.



20b
Are you interested in developing a strategy for this challenge? Please elaborate on your response.

- **Yes**
- **No**

20c
Please detail your strategy/strategies for overcoming this challenge.

Q21
Have you faced any other gender related challenges as a male primary school teacher?

- **No** *(Skip logic takes participants to Q24)*
- **Yes - please click on the text box to describe <u>one</u> challenge**

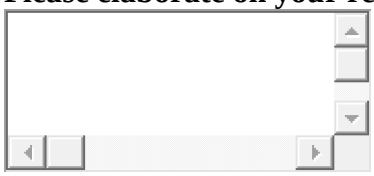
You will have two (2) more opportunities to add challenges (in questions 22 and 23).

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Please tick the appropriate box to detail how you deal with this challenge.

- This is not a challenge for me (*<u>Display logic ensures the next question they receive is 21a</u>*)
- This is a challenge for me but I do not have a strategy to overcome it (*<u>21b</u>*)
- This is a challenge for me and I have a strategy to overcome it (*<u>21c</u>*)

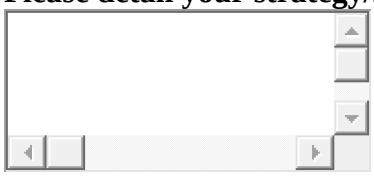
21a
Please elaborate on your response as to why this is not a challenge for you.



21b
Are you interested in developing a strategy for this challenge? Please elaborate on your response.

- **Yes**
- **No**

21c
Please detail your strategy/strategies for overcoming this challenge.



Q22

Have you faced any other gender related challenges as a male primary school teacher?

- **No** *(Skip logic takes participants to Q24)*
- **Yes - please click on the text box to describe <u>one</u> challenge**

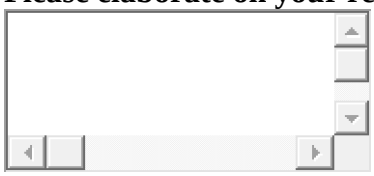
You will have one (1) more opportunities to add challenges (in question 23).

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Please tick the appropriate box to detail how you deal with this challenge.

- This is not a challenge for me (*<u>Display logic ensures the next question they receive is 22a</u>*)
- This is a challenge for me but I do not have a strategy to overcome it (*<u>22b</u>*)
- This is a challenge for me and I have a strategy to overcome it (*<u>22c</u>*)

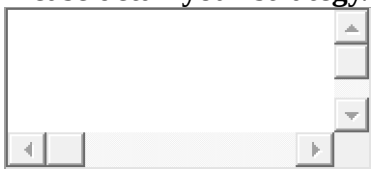
22a
Please elaborate on your response as to why this is not a challenge for you.



22b
Are you interested in developing a strategy for this challenge? Please elaborate on your response.

- **Yes**
- **No**

22c
Please detail your strategy/strategies for overcoming this challenge



Q23

Have you faced any other gender related challenges as a male primary school teacher?

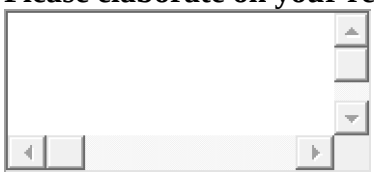
- **No** *(Skip logic takes participants to Q24)*
- **Yes - please click on the text box to describe <u>one</u> challenge**

0	1	2	3
Not a Challenge	Slight Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Critical Challenge

Please tick the appropriate box to detail how you deal with this challenge.

- This is not a challenge for me (*<u>Display logic ensures the next question they receive is 23a</u>*)
- This is a challenge for me but I do not have a strategy to overcome it (*<u>23b</u>*)
- This is a challenge for me and I have a strategy to overcome it (*<u>23c</u>*)

23a
Please elaborate on your response as to why this is not a challenge for you.



23b
Are you interested in developing a strategy for this challenge? Please elaborate on your response.

- **Yes**
- **No**

23c
Please detail your strategy/strategies for overcoming this challenge

Conclusion

Q24
If you feel comfortable and are able; can you describe how you differentiated between a slight, moderate and critical challenge in the previous questions?

Q25
This research study will also include a secondary interview phase that will explore these gender related challenges and strategies in more depth.
If you would like to be considered as an interview participant, please write your contact email address in the box below.

Q26a
Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

Q26b
Thank you for taking the time to consider this survey.

Appendix C

Self-Nomination for Interview Phase

Survey 2 – Interview Nomination

Thank you for agreeing to take part in the second interview stage of this study. Please fill in the form below.
Interview participants will be chosen to ensure variety in demographics such as age and school context.

Name	
School	
Position (for example: classroom teacher, music specialist, AST/PE specialist etc)	
Age	
Year of teaching experience	
Contact email address	

Appendix D

Ethical Approval

Social Science Ethics Officer
Private Bag 01 Hobart
Tasmania 7001 Australia
Tel: (03) 6226 1832
Fax: (03) 6226 7148
Human.ethics@utas.edu.au

HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (TASMANIA) NETWORK

02 May 2013

Dr Scott Pedersen
Education
Private Bag 1308

Sent via email

Dear Dr Pedersen

Re: APPROVAL FOR AMENDMENT TO CURRENT PROJECT
Ethics Ref: H0012257 - Challenges unique to the male primary school classroom teacher
Amendment : Addition of approximately 10 individual semi-structured interviews.
Appendix 1: Revised male primary teacher survey.
Appendix 2: Revised email to Principals.
Appendix 3: Revised information sheet for participants.
Appendix 4: Participant consent form for interviews. Appendix 5: Indicative interview questions.

We are pleased to advise that the Chair of the Tasmania Social Sciences Human Research Ethics Committee approved the Amendment to the above project on 29/4/2013.

Yours sincerely

Lauren Black
Ethics Administrator
Office of Research Services
Tel: +61 (03) 6226 2764
Email: lauren.black@utas.edu.au
University of Tasmania
Private Bag 01 Hobart Tas 7001

Appendix E

Email to Principals

Dear

Please allow me to take the opportunity to introduce you to a research project being conducted by Mr. Vaughan Cruickshank Dr. Scott Pedersen and Dr. Allen Hill from the University of Tasmania entitled:

The challenges faced by male primary teachers

This research study will investigate the retention of male primary school teachers in Tasmanian schools. The purpose is to identify the challenges faced male primary teachers and how they overcome these challenges. The findings of this research will be used to further develop appropriate support mechanisms for present and future male primary teachers as they progress through their Bachelor of Education degree and their career. Further investigation of male primary school teacher's perceptions and beliefs, and the implications of these, will allow for improved support mechanisms to be hypothesised and implemented.

We are hoping that you would be willing to allow us to invite all male teachers (classroom, specialists, leadership) from your school to participate. Please find attached the participation information sheet for your reference.

If you are willing for your school to participate could you please forward this email and the attached information sheet to all (full time or part time) male teachers currently teaching at your school?

If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact me on (03) 6324 3298 or via e-mail Vaughan.Cruickshank@utas.edu.au. I would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you. Once we have analysed the information we will be emailing you a summary of our findings. You are welcome to contact us at that time to discuss any issue relating to the research study.

Yours Sincerely,

Vaughan Cruickshank
Student Investigator
University of Tasmania

Appendix F

Information Sheet for Participants

Participant Information Sheet

Study Title: The challenges faced by male primary teachers

Invitation
You are invited to participate in a research study investigating the retention of male primary school classroom teachers in Tasmania. This invitation is being extended to all male primary school classroom teachers currently practising in Tasmanian primary schools.

1. 'What is the purpose of this study?'
The purpose is to identify the challenges faced by male primary teachers and the strategies they use to overcome these challenges. The findings of this research will be used to further develop appropriate support mechanisms for present and future male primary teachers as they progress through their Bachelor of Education degree and their career. This study is being undertaken to fulfil the requirements of Vaughan Cruickshank's PhD, under the supervision of Dr. Scott Pedersen and Dr. Allen Hill at the University of Tasmania.

2. 'Why have I been invited to participate in this study?'
You are eligible to participate in this study because you are a male primary school teacher (classroom, specialist or leadership) within Tasmania. Through this study, you are being given the opportunity to share your views, understandings and perceptions regarding the male primary teaching experience and your journey undertaken to enter the profession.

4. 'What does this study involve?'
This study involves completing an online survey. The survey questions will concern the retention of male primary school teachers and the survey should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey you will be given an opportunity to nominate yourself as a participant in the second stage of this study, which will consist of interviews. The purpose of these interviews is to elaborate on the responses and results of the online survey. A selection of those who self-nominate will be invited to participate in the interviews. Those selected will be chosen to ensure variety in demographics such as age and school context, and will be contacted later this year to confirm their interest and establish an appropriate time to complete their interview.

It is important that you understand that your involvement is this study is voluntary. While we would be pleased to have you participate, we respect your right to decline.

There will be no consequences to you if you decide not to participate. If you decide to discontinue participation at any time, you may do so without providing an explanation.

5. Are there any possible benefits from participation in this study?
The study aims to identify and develop explicit and purposeful strategies to genuinely assist male primary teachers throughout their time at university and beyond. As your responses to this survey will require a degree of reflection upon your practice, experiences and perceptions. It is expected that the insight you can provide for this study will allow us to better identify why male primary teachers choose to pursue the teaching profession, why the number of males electing to pursue career in teaching is declining, and how we can further support male teachers as they progress through their Bachelor of Education degree and beyond into the first years of professional classroom teaching practice.

6. Are there any possible risks from participation in this study?
There are no specific risks anticipated with participation in this study. It is assured that your responses will be treated in the strictest confidence and that your anonymity will be ensured throughout the study.

7. Data Storage
All electronic data will be kept by Dr Scott Pedersen and will be password secure. The computers upon which electronic data and back-up electronic data will be stored (password protected) are located on University of Tasmania premises within the Faculty of Education in locked offices. Data will be held for a period of at least five (5) years from the date of publication (this includes the publication of the thesis). Data will be destroyed through the erasure of all electronic data files.

8. What if I have questions about this research?
If you would like to discuss any aspect of this study please feel free to contact either Vaughan Cruickshank on (03) 6324 3298 or via e-mail Vaughan.Cruickshank@utas.edu.au or Dr Scott Pedersen on (03) 6324 3554 or via email Scott.Pedersen@utas.edu.au. Either of us would be happy to discuss any aspect of the research with you. Once we have analysed the information we will be emailing you a summary of our findings. You are welcome to contact us at that time to discuss any issue relating to the research study.

This study has been approved by the Tasmanian Social Science Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval number: H12257). If you have concerns or complaints about the conduct of this study should contact the Executive Officer of the HREC (Tasmania) Network on (03) 6226 7479 or email human.ethics@utas.edu.au. The Executive Officer is the person nominated to receive complaints from research participants. You will need to quote H0012257.

Thank you for taking the time to consider this study.
If you wish to take part in it, a consent form is included in the survey.
This information sheet is for you to keep.

Yours Sincerely,

Vaughan Cruickshank
Student Investigator

Dr. Scott Pedersen
Chief Investigator

Appendix G

Indicative Interview Questions

Interview one

Can you tell me about your experiences of being a male primary teacher?

Do you think your gender has affected your experiences as a male primary teacher?

- Can you tell me about some specific examples?

What are some of the biggest challenges for you as a male primary teacher? Why are some challenges more significant for you than others?

Prompt questions (if required)

Can you tell me about your experiences in relation to making physical contact with your students?

Can you tell me about your workload/the non-teaching roles you have in your school?

- Are all teachers expected to take on additional non-teaching roles? Do you think workload is the same for all teachers in your school?

Can you tell me about your relationships with your teaching colleagues and school leaders?

- Do you sometimes feel socially isolated?

Interview two

How do you deal with the gender related challenges you face as a male primary teacher?

How effective are your strategies for dealing/coping with these challenges?

- How did you learn your coping strategies?
- If you don't have a coping strategy; where would you go to find some?

What factors influence your coping efficacy/confidence to deal with the gender related challenges you face and persist within the primary teaching profession?

- Discussion around Bandura 4 types of influence on self-efficacy (Personal experience, modelling, verbal persuasion, physiological factors)

Prompt questions (if required)

How do you deal with uncertainty in relation to making physical contact with your students?

How do you deal with having an increased workload because of expectations to take on 'masculine' roles with your school?

How do you deal with the social isolation you perceive/experience in your school?

Publications

Cruickshank, V., Pedersen, S., Hill, A., & Callingham, R. (2015). Construction and validation of a survey instrument to determine the gender-related challenges faced by pre-service male primary teachers. *International Journal of Research & Method in Education*, *38*(2), 184-199.

Cruickshank, V. (2014). Challenges faced by the male primary teacher: A literature review. In N. Fitzallen, R. Reaburn & F. Fan (Eds.), *The future of educational research: Perspectives from beginning researchers* (pp. 87-98). Rotterdam, The Netherlands: Sense.

Cruickshank, V. (2012). *Why men choose to become primary teachers.* Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference, University of Sydney, Australia.